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Asia pay-TV unplugged in Bali

Ultimately, there's lots of good news for Asia's pay-TV industry. TV viewing is up, growth prospects are high, large operators are investing more money, investor sentiment is up, innovation is a priority, digital connectivity in multichannel homes is at 35% and rising, double digit pay-TV revenue growth is forecast over the next five years...

The pitfalls and challenges? Regulations, mostly. And infrastructure/connectivity challenges. Low ARPUs are a problem. There's also an ego or two standing in the way of essential consolidation in India. Plus various content and carriage issues, delegates at Media Partners Asia's (MPA) first Asia Pacific Pay-TV Operators Summit (APOS) heard from a keynote, an overview and 10 panel discussions.

One of the biggest ogres is content commoditisation. Fox International Channels president and chief executive, David Haslingden, said in his opening keynote that some operators didn't see content as core to their business "but as a means to another end. For these people, the commoditisation of content is a goal. For us... it's a disaster".

More on page 2

asiacontentwatch

BabyTV

BabyTV is a 24-hour commercial-free channel for infants, toddlers and their parents offering developmental content created in collaboration with childhood experts. The channel is distributed as part of the Fox International Channels bouquet.

www.asiacontentwatch.com

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From page 1: APOS

As the two-day summit opened in Bali on Thursday (6 May), MPA director Vivek Couto said Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam were becoming increasingly important in driving regional subscriber growth, and that IPTV was giving saturated markets like Korea and Japan new impetus for growth.

Couto said basic pay-TV product growth "still has lots of legs" in India, Malaysia and Indonesia, joined by the Philippines and Thailand "if certain dynamics sort themselves out".

"All of these are markets where TV viewing is actually increasing every day, sometimes more on the terrestrial dial but pay-TV is also benefiting and in places where over-the-top, mobility or online is potentially a threat... operators are innovating to co-opt the future," Couto said.

MPA forecasts more than 460 million pay-TV households – or 56% penetration – in the region by 2015.

The market for digital pay-TV is already significant – 116 million digital multi-channel homes in 2009, or about 35% of the total pay-TV universe. By 2015, MPA says more than 70% of the region's pay-TV universe will have at least one digital set-top box.

Digital services remain a key driver of revenue growth. Digital pay-TV subscription revenues grew 25% in 2009 to US$13.5 billion, MPA figures show. Of that, HDTV's contribution was less than US$2 billion while value-added services such as VOD, PVR and PPV contributed less than US$1 billion.

"Yet it is the growth of HD content, especially local and regional HD content in Greater China, India and Southeast Asia that will prove important to the growth of the digital TV revenue pie," Couto said, adding that by the end of 2015, the aggregate contribution from HDTV and value-added services to the digital TV subscription revenue pie would be close to 30% and 15% of the total pay-TV revenue pie, including analogue and ad sales.

Others are not as positive – at least not in the foreseeable future – about HD's prospects in India. One of the conference's quotable quotes was from Tata Sky chief executive, Vikram Kaushik, who compared HD to a Paris fashion show, saying "everyone thinks it's very fashionable. But it makes no sense". (See page 9)

Broadband growth in Asia Pacific was strong last year. The region has more than 200 million broadband users. MPA forecasts a rise to 420 million by 2015, when Korea and Japan will be joined by Hong Kong, Singapore and, potentially, Malaysia and Australia, where next-generation networks are under way.

"The good news is that the macro environment in Asia Pacific has firmed up, boosting economic growth and consumer demand. Investor sentiment has also improved. This is helping pay-TV and broadband operators as well as content providers tap public and private markets to raise capital," Couto said.

• More APOS coverage on the Features section of www.contentasia.tv

Who was at... MPA's Asia-Pac Pay-TV Operators' Summit

It's perhaps easier – or shorter – to say which of Asia's pay-TV bosses weren't at Media Partners Asia's first annual Asia-Pacific Pay-TV Operators Summit in Bali (6-7 May) than who was.

One of the big party slots was taken by Fox International Channels, which brought out Alison Iraheta from American Idol season 8 to perform live, and "female Indiana Jones" Mireya Mayor, star of Nat Geo Wild's new show Wild Nights.

Second night moved off the resort location to the beach, courtesy of Indonesia's leading direct-broadcast platform, Indovision. MNC/Indovision boss Hary Tanoesoedibjo said the aim was to provide a typical, local, Balinese dining experience. Which he did, with a never-ending flow of fresh seafood.

Granada TV, celebrating among other things its first-ever live broadcast to Asia (U.K. election coverage), flew a giant balloon over the resort for the strategic recreation and sunset cocktails slot. The grand finale was a fireworks display. No word from ITV Studios/Granada TV boss on whether or not the bright bursts lighting up the night sky were a comment on the election outcome.

The event's caffeine boost belonged to BBC Worldwide Channels, which laid on the world's most expensive coffee – the Indonesian Kopi Luwak – at its stand. The back-story involves civet cats, coffee beans, and their excrement... if you watch BBC Knowledge enough you would know.

What delegates didn't get were Eurosport beach towels and TV5-Monde pool-side slippers. Why? Because Indonesian customs officials were holding onto them. Why? Who knows. For everything that everyone had an opinion on during the show, some things are and will remain a mystery.

• More APOS pics in the June issue of *ContentAsia*...in Print + Digital, published for the BroadcastAsia show in Singapore.



Zubin Gandevia, FIC; Vivek Couto, Media Partners Asia at the Fox International Channels dinner



Alvin Lee, Time Warner; Nigel Cummings, Australia Network; Arjen van Mierlo, Eurosport, at the Granada TV Strategic Recreation & Sunset Cocktails



Hary Tanoesoedibjo, MNC president/CEO, at the Indovision dinner on Friday night




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Hi-tension as Singapore's sports D-day day draws near

World Cup deal closed as StarHub puts finishing touches on new channels, packaging

Singapore pay-TV platform StarHub has been given the regulatory green light to launch its two new sports channels – Racquet Channel and NBA TV – boosting its sports package ahead of the biggest shift in Singapore's sports TV history later this year.

And that's by no means the end of Singapore's latest sports action. As the finishing touches and final technical details on the new services were being put in place ahead of the 23 May launch, StarHub and rival SingTel announced an 11th-hour rights deal for the FIFA World Cup.

Both platforms said on Friday night (7 May) that they will air all matches live for S$88 (early bird special at $66), making it one of the most expensive World Cup packages in the region. HD versions are available at no additional cost.

Singapore football fans appear to be less than impressed at the pricing, as witnessed in blogs and forums.

Former national footballer Goh Tat Chuan, was quoted in local daily The Straits Times as saying that he would not be signing up. "I dislike the fact that FIFA held us to ransom, so I'm going to boycott the deal by catching the matches through the Net," the weekend report said.

There's no word on how much the two paid for the joint bid, but speculation is that the final figure went above S$20 million/ US$15 million.

The last-minute World Cup togetherness does not mask the fierce rivalry between the two platforms, kicked off last year when SingTel won the bid for the next three Barclays' English Premiere League (BPL) seasons.

StarHub's new sports channels and services are part of StarHub's post-BPL strategy, which also includes adding Ten Sports to the platform's cricket pack in place of Star Cricket. Star Cricket, packaged by ESPN Star Sports, exits StarHub at the end of June.

A fourth new service – PGA Tour on Demand – was added on 8 May.

Although StarHub may lose some subscribers to SingTel when the BPL and ESPN Star Sports channels shift to SingTel this year, the platform is confident it has enough else – including sports – to retain its subs base of 541,000.

"We have more sports programming than ESPN Star Sports does and we can operate our sports channels for much cheaper than they can operate theirs," StarHub's head of content, Kathleen Syron, told delegates at the Asia Pacific Pay-TV Operators Summit (APOS) in Bali on 6-7 May.

Syron also said Singapore was likely to become a two-box, dual-subscription market. Only a tiny fraction of subscribers were on StarHub solely because of BPL, she added.

StarHub's sports plan includes steep price cuts to its basic sports pack, which carries Eurosport, Football Channel, Goal TV1/2 and Golf Channel, among others.

From June, the cable platform slashes the cost of its sports pack by more than 5%, from S$25 to S$12.

Rates for the premium sports services remain unchanged. All Sports Network pack (All Sports Network, All Sports Network HD) for S$20; Cricket group (Cricket Extra, Neo Cricket, Ten Sports) at S$30.

The new NBA TV channels will carry one live game a day and up to 35 hours of original NBA programming every week, plus statistics, scores, news, among others.

The Racquet Channel, packaged for StarHub by IMG Sports Media, kicks off with exclusive coverage of the French Open. Other tennis properties will include the U.S. Open and the ATP World Tour.

The channel, which consolidates StarHub's racquet sports content from other sports channels, will also carry a range of racquet sports such as table tennis (World Team Table Tennis Championship, ATTU Table Tennis Championship, ITTF Pro Tour Table Tennis) and badminton (All England Open Badminton, Asia Badminton Championship, European Badminton Championship, BWF Super Series Grand Finals, World Badminton Championships, BWF Thomas and Uber Cup).

Sports fans say the new services are a major plus because, among other advantages, they free up space on StarHub's SuperSports channels for other sports content.

SuperSports and SuperSports Plus line-ups include WWE Smackdown, WWE Raw, MotoGP, and Rugby Union Internationals.



> "We have more sports programming than ESPN Star Sports does and we can operate our sports channels for much cheaper than they can operate theirs."
>
> Kathleen Syron
> Head of Content, StarHub

channels

Local channels drive take-up, ops say

Adding in-house channels is on the agenda of platforms across the region as they localise, fill gaps in line-ups, and generally attempt to differentiate themselves in as many ways as possible from the competition.

"Our belief in the vernacular is a proven business model," Grant Ferguson, Astro's group CFO, told delegates at the Asia-Pacific Pay-TV Operators Summit (APOS) in Bali this month. "We see a shortage of quality content in almost every market," he added.

Astro has 26 in-house channels. "Those vernacular channels are our driver channels," Ferguson said, adding: "To have control in our own market of premium vernacular content will remain a key element of our business model."

StarHub's head of content, Kathleen Syron, said new services were likely to be channels with acquired content packaged for local audiences as the platform attempted to deepen penetration into Singapore's heartlands.

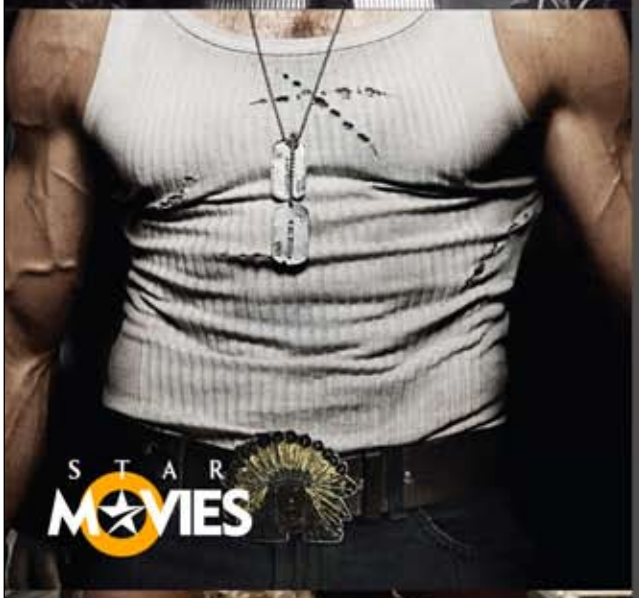
Philippines direct-to-home satellite platform Cygnal may also add its own branded in-house channels to its line up in the next one or two years, Benjie Fernandez, PLDT MediaQuest MD, told APOS delegates. There's no timetable yet. Fernandez said the platform's programming strategy was "driven by affordability", with a narrow line up featuring the top of each genre.

At the same time, relationships between platform operators and channel owners/ distributors are also changing. "Times have changed. It's no longer just a carriage agreement," Syron said.

• The changing relationship between platforms & channels will be covered in-depth in *ContentAsia*'s BroadcastAsia print+digital issue



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Asia-Pacific press freedom improves... but region is still home to world's worst offenders, new report says

The Asia-Pacific region saw some significant press freedom improvements in 2009, according to a Freedom House's new study, "Freedom of the Press 2010: A Global Survey of Media Independence".

However, only one Asian country made the top 50 list of the Global 2010 Press Freedom Rankings - Japan, at 34th position.

In the Pacific, New Zealand (which topped the Asia-Pacific list) was 12th, followed way down by Australia at 37.

Way down, South Korea placed 69th, followed by Hong Kong at 73 and India at 74. East Timor came 78th position, ahead of the Philippines, which was 99th.

Despite improvements, Indonesia was way down, at 107, in the 2010 Press Freedom rankings, but ahead of Malaysia, which ranked 142nd.

The agency says Malaysia's communications regulators responsible for the internet have " become one of the greatest roadblocks for freedom of expression in the country".

While Indonesia is "home to a vibrant and diverse media environment... press freedom remains hampered by a number of legal and regulatory restrictions". The Indonesia country report also says reporters often practice self-censorship to avoid running afoul of civil and criminal libel laws.

Hovering at below the 150 mark were Singapore (152), Vietnam (177), China (181), and Laos (183).

North Korea was last, at 196. In its country reports, Freedom House said North Korean media continues to be tightly controlled by the state, with TV sets permanently tuned to state channels and all publications subject to strict supervision and censorship. Internet access is restricted to a few thousand people, and foreign websites are blocked, the organisation says.

But the black market for information and entertainment provides a host of alternatives, including pirated recordings of South Korean dramas, and radios capable of receiving foreign programmes, the report says.

This year's findings come against a global backdrop of intensifying restrictions, the study says.

In Asia, improvements were seen in Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives, India, East Timor, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Mongolia.

Declines were noted in Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, the Philippines and Fiji.

The study says that the region "also continues to be the home of two of the survey's poorest performers, North Korea and Burma, and the world's largest poor performer, China."

Globally, press freedom has declined for the 8th consecutive year, "producing a global landscape in which only one in six people live in countries with a free press," the report says. The most notable declines were in Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East.

China's administration was one of a few governments singled out for " systematically encroaching on the comparatively free environment of the internet and new media.

"Sophisticated techniques are being used to censor and block access to particular types of information, to flood the internet with antidemocratic, nationalistic views, and to provide broad surveillance of citizen activity," the report added.

Freedom of the Press 2010
Table of Global Press Freedom rankings in ASIA-PACIFIC

Rank 2010	Country	Rating	Status
1	New Zealand	14	Free
	Palau	14	Free
3	Marshall Islands	17	Free
4	Japan	21	Free
	Micronesia	21	Free
6	Australia	22	Free
7	Vanuatu	23	Free
8	Papua New Guinea	24	Free
	Taiwan	24	Free
10	Tuvalu	26	Free
11	Kiribati	27	Free
12	Nauru	28	Free
13	Samoa	29	Free
	Solomon Islands	29	Free
15	South Korea	30	Free
16	Tonga	32	Partly Free
17	Hong Kong	33	Partly Free
	India	33	Partly Free
19	East Timor	35	Partly Free
20	Mongolia	39	Partly Free
21	Philippines	48	Partly Free
22	Maldives	50	Partly Free
23	Indonesia	52	Partly Free
24	Fiji	54	Partly Free
25	Bangladesh	56	Partly Free
26	Bhutan	57	Partly Free
27	Thailand	58	Partly Free
	Nepal	59	Partly Free
29	Cambodia	61	Not Free
	Pakistan	61	Not Free
31	Malaysia	64	Not Free
32	Singapore	68	Not Free
33	Sri Lanka	72	Not Free
34	Brunei	75	Not Free
35	Afghanistan	76	Not Free
36	Vietnam	82	Not Free
37	China	84	Not Free
	Laos	84	Not Free
39	Burma	95	Not Free
40	North Korea	99	Not Free

Status	Number	Percentage
Free	15	37.5%
Partly Free	13	32.5%
Not Free	12	30%
TOTAL	**40**	**100%**



All about the future, BroadcastAsia organisers promise

3D, multiplatform take centre stage at June show

Multi-platform content delivery along with 3D broadcasting takes centre stage at this year's BroadcastAsia2010 conference in Singapore in June.

This year's theme is "Integrating Technology, Experiencing Content", and organisers are promising a four-day focus on "the pertinent needs of the broadcasting and media landscape today".

The agenda also includes the influence of social media on the broadcasting industry; technical implementation of workflow and digital asset management.

The show runs from 15-18 June, alongside the annual CommunicAsia event.

The BroadcastAsia conference opens with an address by Colin Prior, founder and member of international MHEG promotion alliance, Impala.

In a presentation entitled "Embrace & Engage the Future: Broadband, 3D & Beyond", Prior will talk about how hybrid broadcast and broadband delivery are altering traditional forms of broadcasting as well as broadcaster control.

The track also includes insights from Ericsson's Carl Furgusson, vice president, Ericsson TV Solutions' Compression Product Management, on business models for 3D and "realistic short and medium-term options and likely costs for 3DTV delivery".

Speakers involved in discussing multi-platform content delivery include Richard Redmond, Harris Corporation Broadcast Communications' strategic marketing director, and Lindsay Cornell, BBC's principal systems architect.

Redmond will look at the content delivery options and business models available on digital multimedia broadcast networks, as well as explore issues like the impact new opportunities will have on infrastructure and spectrum requirements.

Cornell will discuss "the future of broadcasting and the move towards convergence across all platforms, and what this means in terms of technology platform, content and threats and opportunities in the broadcasting world".

China's online advertising up 53% this year

China's online advertising reached RMB4.06 billion/US$595 million in the first three months of this year - a 52.7% increase over the same period last year, according to the latest data from joint venture mainland research company CR-Nielsen.

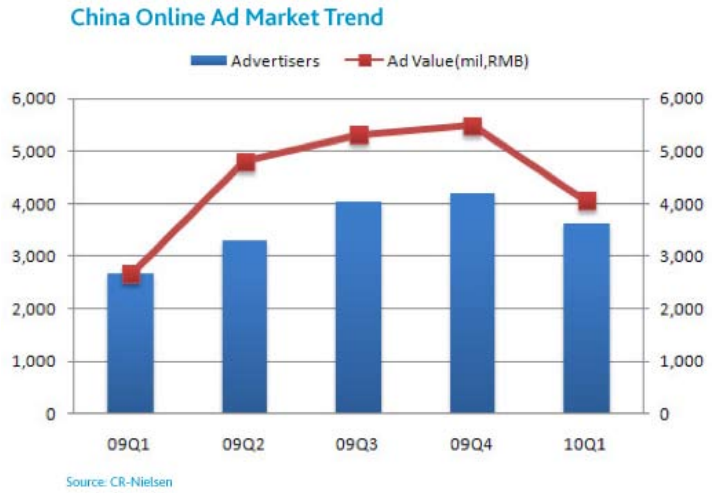
Sail Ma, CR-Nielsen's vice president, online product and research, said the trend was expected to continue for the rest of this year.

More than 3,600 advertisers in China advertised online in the first quarter of 2010, an increase of 36.2% from Q1 2009.

The fashion industry was the top spender, with almost 18% market share.

"This is a good start for the Chinese online advertising industry," Ma said.

"Despite the difficult economic environment many countries struggled through last year, China enjoyed growth, and saw tremendous increases. As more advertisers step into the online market and advertisers regain their confidence, this trend of rapid growth should continue into the remainder of 2010".



3 Strikes comes to Asia

France's strict "3 strikes" rules against unauthorised content supply online comes to Asia at the end of the month.

The topic is expected to be among the hottest on the agenda during the annual Music Matters event (26-28 May).

Alvin Lee, Time Warner's executive director, International Relations and Public Policy, Asia Pacific, says there is growing support in Asia for a "graduated response" approach to sites and platforms guilty of carrying unauthorised content.

Lee describes the policy as "a non-litigious, educational way of dealing with piracy on the internet... What we want to be able to do is work with ISPs to notify people who are unloading content that they have no rights to".

Lee says the expectation is that 85% of offenders will stop after the first notice. After three notices, offenders have their internet access cut off, or "throttled".

Other speakers include Paul Abfalter, Telstra International's general counsel, and John Kennedy, chairman and CEO, IFPI.

thetweetlife

And even more congratulations! Alannah & Jeremy Hall-Smith welcomed Poppy Allegra into their family at 2.36pm on 7 May.
8:08 AM May 10th via web

Who says what about India... http://bit.ly/cxxSMW
10:43 PM May 9th via Facebook

I posted 5 photos on Facebook in the album "FIC Dinner & Show" http://bit.ly/9ZEMWM
1:19 AM May 7th via Facebook

Granada TV's first live feed ever brings the U.K. elections to Asia via satellite. Tune in at 6.05am (Singapore time) tom (May 7)
11:28 PM May 6th via web

Easier to talk about who isn't in Bali today for Media Partner's Asia's Asia-Pacific Pay TV Operators Summit than who is. Jam-packed opening this morning....
May 6 at 9:43am (via Facebook)

"For some, the commoditisation of content is a goal. For us it's a disaster." - David Haslingden in his APOS keynote in Bali
10:06 AM May 6th via web [Ed's note: Full feed of quotes from Bali followed, including MPA's Vivek Couto, Astro's Grant Ferguson, MNC's Hary Tanoesoedibjo...]

Confirmed. Fox Int'l Channels' buyer Rupi Sagoo is leaving the regional network. No word yet on why... or what she's doing next.
6:35 PM May 4th via web

More congratulations! Multi Channels Asia's Gregg Creevey and wife Susan welcomed their first child, Emma Grace, into the family in the very early hours of Sunday, 2 May.
May 2 at 11:58am (via Facebook)



Who was at … this year's ITV's Korea Day in Seoul at the end of April



Ji-Hye Han, Seung-Han Shin, KCC; Min-Kyung Kim, Hee-Jung Suh, Dong-A Daily



Jun-Hyuk Oh, Yong Hee Lee, C4U Media



Hyung Jin Jung, On Media; Myung Lip Yoon, Hansol Education; Sangwhi Ahn, CJ Media



Martin Uden, UK Ambassador of Korea; Lee Bartlett, James Ross, ITV Studios Global Entertainment



Won Hyung Lee, On Media; Jin-Young Yu, Il Yong Ryu, OBS



Kwang Hee Oh, Tae-Won Kim, CJ Media; Annie Hye-Yoon Chung, On Media





Ha-Yeon Shin, OBS; Hae Young Kim, Hyeseung Seo, On Media



Oh Seok Kwon, KBS; Jong-Moon Song, Aeon S. H. Chang, Juyeong Han, KBSi



Alice Ma, Sung Il Kim, HCN



Jeonggwan Shin, Taesung Kim, Heesul Park, SBS; Jinchae Lim, SK Broadband



Jeongseak Ha, Korea Telecom, Insik Kang, Korea Telecom; Yongsoo Ahn, Bongchul Shin, SBS



Eun-Nim Park, Nine Planners; Bum Jin Seo, SK Telecom



Soyoun Choi, Nine Planners; Hyeonza Hong, ITV Studios Global Entertainment



Seonghun Jeong, KCC; Soomin Lee, MBC Gangneung



Jun-Gyun Mok, SBS; Sin-Woong Kang, T-Cast



Yong Hoo Park, Living TV; Kenny S. Kwak, Kenny & Co Entertainment

Who said what about India at...

Media Partners Asia's first Asia-Pacific Pay-TV Operators Summit in Bali on 6-7 May

"HD is like attending a fashion show in Paris. Everyone thinks it's very fashionable. But it makes no sense. For every channel, you sacrifice three. Why would you do that? Then it costs the consumer an arm and a leg."

Vikram Kaushik
Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Tata Sky (India), in the session, "India: Crossing the Digital Divide"

"The high levels of cash burn point clearly to consolidation [in India's DTH environment]. The problem is that the egos are so large and the business is so big it's a question of who is willing to blink first. It will happen, it might take a few years, but it will happen."

Vikram Kaushik, Tata Sky

"DVR will happen in India. What you are seeing in India is a slow burner DVR. This has been the experience in every market place in the world."

"Don't assume low ARPU means low expectations. They have enormous expectations. But the feedback from the DVR has been extremely successful and it gives us confidence that DVR takeup that we have seen in other marketplaces will be replicated in India."

Sue Taylor
Senior Vice President and Managing Director, Asia Pacific, NDS

"All our value add service have seen significant traction – but we're selling it at a one rupee a day, that's what we charge the consumer. The base price of services in India is completely and ridiculously under-priced… it doesn't make sense, but it's dictated because of the anomaly of cable pricing."

"Sun direct launched HD with IPL cricket and their exclusive rights to HD content and sports – advertising free. My information is that they couldn't even sell 2,000 boxes without subsidies, without giving them away. The logic for HD in India is weak."

Vikram Kaushik, Tata Sky

"More than 50% of India's population is below the age of 35. This population may like something new and a lot of variety, but they are not going to pay. Old as gold is out of the window. They won't pay for anything old. Premium services revenue will come in the form of events – religious, film and cricket. So the value add services are there. There is scope in the future… but they haven't taken off yet."

Ravi Mansukhani
Chief Executive Officer, InCable

"The ARPU we earn from PVR homes is exactly double for other homes. The market lends itself to segmentation. People are reacting to value add at different levels. We can get up to 150,000 people to buy a movie over a weekend if it's released within four to six weeks of theatrical. If you can release a film very early on the digital platform, you're taking the opportunity away from pirates."

Vikram Kaushik, Tata Sky

"There isn't space for value add in India… there is enough content available. There are already 300-400 channels. Each regional language has 10-12 channels. Movies released one month ago are already on the channels. The only thing value-add services can offer is adult content."

K Jayaraman
Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Hathway Cable & Datacom

Quotes from APOS' other sessions also appear on www.contentasia.tv (http://www.contentasia.tv/feature.php?newsid=6063); *ContentAsia*'s Twitter feed (www.twitter.com/contentasia) and on *ContentAsia*'s Facebook page http://www.facebook.com/note.php?created&&suggest&note_id=119726791383493&id=353054674252

ContentAsia's 20/20 interview asks those who have been in the industry in Asia for the past 10 years at least to look back – and forward – and tell us what they see. As part of a series that will run through 2010, Sunita Rajan, BBC Worldwide Channels' vice president for advertising sales Asia and Australasia, talks about the 'tiger economies', golden era in the satellite TV, expectations and more.



The 20/20 interview

What do you think the biggest influence on Asia's media industry in the past 10 years has been? "Content has been the defining factor for choice, influence and the pathway for media companies – both buyers and sellers."

10 years ago, lots of companies said they were totally digital. What's the biggest difference between what you remember as the digital of 2000 and your digital of today? "The millennium saw excitement and frenzy in investment and opportunity by private entrepreneurs and established organisations who rushed to find their fortunes in the dotcom boom. A decade later some smart business models that identified the need gap and focussed on their core competence survived but with some hard decisions and a long wait for profit. Today the consumer is in control and technology has enabled audiences in all target groups to engage with the digital medium faster, better and for more reasons than we imagined a decade ago!"

Of all the things (tech, countries, etc) we have known and been excited over in the past 10 years, what do you think is the one (or two) that failed to live up to expectations? "Economies and enterprise being able to rise above geo political issues with the private sector driving change and growth in what is commonly referred to as the tiger economies in Asia. The value ascribed to pay-television audiences and content as compared to terrestrial television, which still commands a higher share of advertising budgets."

What are the biggest operational differences you have seen over the past decade? "More options available for content to be delivered to audiences that are available on different platforms and at different touch points on a 24/7 basis. For example, BBC World News' content is also available on 81 cruise ships, 46 airlines, 36 mobile phone networks and a number of major online platforms including bbc.com/news."

Forecasts that didn't come true... or the ones that came true but not in the way you expected. "The region showed resilience during tough times in the past decade – the financial crisis (1998), dotcom bust (2001), SARS (2003), tsunami (2004) and the most scary of them all in 2009 (worst recession in over half a century!). So let's hope we have turned the corner and with the power shifting to the East for the next decade."

Is there anything that might have happened that didn't (or hasn't yet)? "I would hope some more positive stories of success and profit that we all need to see in the business of pay-TV in Asia where a flight to quality by consumers of content is acknowledged by our partners with premium value."

What would you never do again no matter how much money you were offered? "No regrets."

What would you do again in a nanosecond, even if no money was involved? "Re-live the golden years of satellite TV in the mid 90s soon after the launch of Star TV in 1991."

What's your take on social networks? "Audiences are in control therefore to protect your brand image it is important to participate and respond to conversations about your brand in the social media space. No one seems to have figured out the ideal business model to monetise the size and growth of users of social media networks and that would be the next milestone."

What has been the biggest disappointment? Why? "Multiple media platforms aspire for a share of the advertising pie which has not grown, which makes for more choice for the consumer, complicated metrics used for a vast array of media and time constrained users/consumers in Asia."

What are you still deeply unsure about? "2020... with the pace of change drastically different from 10 years ago."

The phrase you take with you into every business development meeting? "Asia is not a homogenous region."

What do you think the costs of all the focus on speed and technology is? "It means nothing without great content."

Crystal ball gaze for a moment... what do you think we will be talking about in 2020? "20/20 Vision, which will be hard to aspire to with a 24/7 focus on different screens."

ContentAsia's ongoing focus on Asia's most important buyers explores how they think and what they want.

Michael Dick, head of acquisition for Fox International Channels, talks about challenges, what he hates (and loves) about the job, the risks and more.



What kinds of sales pitches do you respond best to? "Honest pitches that are clear and open about what the programme or film is and is not, are always best. No matter how good the pitch is, we will have to see the end product at some time. If it doesn't hold true to what we have been sold we won't be going back for more."

On decision making process for acquisitions... "Now that we are a larger channel group, the process of finding and selecting product is changing for us and will vary from channel to channel. But largely our channel heads will select the titles they are interested in. How we find the content can vary as it could be me, the channel head directly for their channel, or someone will find something that's not for their channel but they think it will fit another channel in the group so they will pass along the details. Once we have highlighted something that we would like, we expand the selection process to look at and put a lot more emphasis and value on the deal terms for the title. For example, if we can't get the usage and rights we require, we will be walking away from the deal rather than compromising on what could be less than we want and need."

Do you remember the first programme/series you ever bought and what you were thinking at the time? "It wasn't all that long ago and oddly enough I haven't got a clue! I have obviously moved onto the next big deal."

Is there any show you wish you had bought? "I don't think there is anything I wish I had bought as there is always something new just around the corner when a show or film we would have liked to buy goes elsewhere."

If money were no object, which three programmes would you buy tomorrow? "As a point of principle I don't like throwing money at a problem so the programmes and deals I most like and would most like to close tomorrow and going forwards are deals that all involved are pleased with once all is said and done."

What is/has been your greatest television extravagance? "Probably my actual TV and the various gadgets I buy for my home cinema. If I am being extravagant with my acquisitions and deals then I'm not doing things right!"

What do you find most difficult about the programming/acquisition process? "Separating myself from the shows I like to the ones that will fit best with the channels and their respective audiences."

What do you hate most about the acquisitions process? And love? "Definitely hate over-complicated contracts and all of the paperwork. Simple is always better, it's elegant and hopefully more functional for everyone in the long run. I love the fact that I am in, or at least it's supposed to be a fun job and industry. It's easy to forget that from time to time but I do feel very lucky to have a job that requires me to watch TV all day."

The most frustrating moment in the job is when..."Anytime someone says no to me."

Is there anything you wish programme licensing and distribution people would do that they are not doing now? "I hope that as digital media develops distributors will become a little more adventurous, forwards thinking and willing to take more risks in the deals they do rather than shutting up shop until things have played out or they get an un-recoupable minimum guarantee (MG)."

What's the biggest acquisition risk you've ever taken? "All acquisitions are a risk so it's hard to pick one specific deal or title, like most things. The key is to try to make the risk as manageable as possible."

What do you think the most important part of your decision in acquisition is? "More so than ever the focus is on ensuring that an acquisition is going to add value to our business. This doesn't necessarily have to be financial but when deciding to move forward with a deal, the main questions is always 'Can we extract any value from this deal?'"

What programme do you watch most often for your own enjoyment? "I have got a very bad channel flicking habit so I watch just about everything and all at the same time."

The key trade events that you will be attending this year? "We will likely be going to most of the major markets but will be deciding throughout the year based on our needs at the time."

And are you looking for any specific (content) for the next 12 months? "As we have just merged, the Fox International Channels group is very fluid and our needs will be changing through the year while the channels settle in to being part of a larger group. More specifically we will be looking for programming that we can acquire exclusive and first-run rights for."

"More so than ever the focus is on ensuring that an acquisition is going to add value to our business. This doesn't necessarily have to be financial but when deciding to move forward with a deal, the main questions is always 'Can we extract any value from this deal?'"

Michael Dick is among 500 buyers in Asia featured on ContentAsia's subscription service, www.asiacontentwatch.com For more information, please email i_want@contentasia.tv or call +65 6846-5988.

BabyTV

by Malena Amzah

BabyTV is a 24-hour commercial-free channel for infants, toddlers and their parents offering developmental content created in collaboration with childhood experts. The channel is distributed as part of the Fox International Channels bouquet.

The programming focus is on first-run, original content. Shows are mostly commissioned out of Europe and arranged in nine thematic categories: first concepts, guessing games, music/art, activities, bedtime, nature/animals, building friendships, songs/rhymes and imagination/creativity.

The number of new production hours a year has not been disclosed. The BabyTV library currently has about 90 series.

Local flavour is injected into the global content slate with nursery rhymes and songs from different countries. Although English is the primary broadcast language, BabyTV's Asia service has been language customised in Bahasa Indonesia, and Mandarin, with a specialised Japanese text layer.

Although BabyTV does not usually acquire content (and when it does, worldwide rights are required), the network is keen

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Time	Segment Name	Programmes						
05:00 - 05:30	Rise & Shine with BabyTV Friends	Vegimers	The Bonbons	Pim & Pimba	First Baby Songs	Baby Farmer		
05:30 - 06:00		Nico and Bianca	Bouncy Balls	First Baby Songs	Oliver	Mitch Match	Louie's Friends	Walter & Dude
06:00 - 06:30		Who's it? What's it?	Pitch & Potch Sound Machine	Tulli	First Baby Songs	Egg Birds	Baby Art	Small Talk
06:30 - 07:00	Popiz morning stretch	Popiz	Paint me a world	First Baby Songs	Cuddlies	Baby Giants		
07:00 - 07:30	Good morning with Kids & Pets	Kids & Pets	First Baby Songs	Grandpa's Gallery	Tinies' playground	Lily & Pepper	First Baby Songs	Yoyo
07:30 - 08:00	Walter & Dude and Friends	Walter and Dude	Zoom	First Baby Songs	Emma's Theatre	Popiz	Let's Dance	Charlie & the numbers
08:00 - 08:30	Amazing World & other favorites	The Amazing World	First Baby Songs	Bath Tubbies	Baby Art	Cuddlies	Kenny & Goorie & Friends	
08:30 - 09:00	Playing with Hungry Henry	Hungry Henry	Pitch & Potch Sound Machine	Tulli	Lily and Pepper	Grandpa's Gallery	First Baby Songs	Louie's World
09:00 - 09:30	Kids & Pets circle of friends	Kids & Pets	Bouncy Balls	First Baby Songs	Tinies' playground	Oliver	Crystal Ball	First Baby Songs
09:30 - 10:00	Oh Look! It's Baby Giants & friends	Baby Giants	First Baby Songs	Play Time	First Baby Songs	Vegimals		
10:00 - 10:30	Exploring with Mr. Snail	Mr. Snail	Pitch & Potch	First Baby Songs	Draco	Tucky Tales	Baby Album	Colours & Shapes
10:30 - 11:00	Walter & Dude and Friends	Walter and Dude	Zoom	First Baby Songs	Emma's Theatre	Popiz	Let's Dance	Charlie & the numbers
11:00 - 11:30	Amazing World & other favorites	The Amazing World	First Baby Songs	Bath Tubbies	Baby Art	Cuddlies	Kenny & Goorie & Friends	
11:30 - 12:00	Playing with Hungry Henry	Hungry Henry	Pitch & Potch Sound Machine	Tulli	Lily and Pepper	Grandpa's Gallery	First Baby Songs	Louie's World
12:00 - 12:30	Kids & Pets circle of friends	Kids & Pets	Bouncy Balls	First Baby Songs	Tinies' playground	Oliver	Crystal Ball	First Baby Songs
12:30 - 13:00	Oh Look! It's Baby Giants & friends	Baby Giants	First Baby Songs	Play Time	First Baby Songs	Vegimals		
13:00 - 13:30	Exploring with Mr. Snail	Mr. Snail	Pitch & Potch	First Baby Songs	Draco	Tucky Tales	Baby Album	Colours & Shapes
13:30 - 14:00	Walter & Dude and Friends	Walter and Dude	Zoom	First Baby Songs	Emma's Theatre	Popiz	Let's Dance	Charlie & the numbers
14:00 - 14:30	Amazing World & other favorites	The Amazing World	First Baby Songs	Bath Tubbies	Baby Art	Cuddlies	Kenny & Goorie & Friends	
14:30 - 15:00	Playing with Hungry Henry	Hungry Henry	Pitch & Potch Sound Machine	Tulli	Lily and Pepper	Grandpa's Gallery	First Baby Songs	Louie's World
15:00 - 15:30	Kids & Pets circle of friends	Kids & Pets	Bouncy Balls	First Baby Songs	Tinies' playground	Oliver	Crystal Ball	First Baby Songs
15:30 - 16:00	Oh Look! It's Baby Giants & friends	Baby Giants	First Baby Songs	Play Time	First Baby Songs	Vegimals		
16:00 - 16:30	Exploring with Mr. Snail	Mr. Snail	Pitch & Potch	First Baby Songs	Draco	Tucky Tales	Baby Album	Colours & Shapes
16:30 - 17:00	Discovering with Vegimers	Vegimers	The Bonbons	Pim & Pimba	First Baby Songs	Baby Farmer		
17:00 - 17:30	Play & Learn with with Nico & Bianca	Nico and Bianca	Bouncy Balls	First Baby Songs	Oliver	Mitch Match	Louie's Friends	Walter & Dude
17:30 - 18:00	Family fun time	Who's it? What's it?	Pitch & Potch Sound Machine	Tulli	First Baby Songs	Egg Birds	Baby Art	Small Talk
18:00 - 18:30	Baby Art and friends	Popiz	Paint me a world	First Baby Songs	Cuddlies	Baby Giants		
18:30 - 19:00	Winding down with Kids & Pets	Kids & Pets	First Baby Songs	Grandpa's Gallery	Tinies' playground	Lily & Pepper	First Baby Songs	Yoyo
19:00 - 19:30	Bedtime Stories	Crystal Ball	First Baby Songs	Baby Giants	The Amazing World	First Baby Songs	Wooly	
19:30 - 20:00	Sleepy Stories with The Amazing World	Getting Ready for Bed	First Baby Songs	Wish Upon a star	Babynoo	Magic Lantern		
20:00 - 20:30	BabyTV's evening melodies	Relaxing songs and stories accompanied by gentle music						
20:30 - 21:00	Sweet Dreams							
21:00 - 21:30	Good Night hugs	Gentle programming featuring classical music, soft sounds, and lullabies that create a soothing atmosphere						
21:30 - 22:00	Dreamy Nights							

First concepts 10% (2.5 hours)/day
Guessing games 10% (2.5 hours)/day
Music/Art 6% (1.5 hours)/day

Bedtime 40% (9.5 hours)/day
Nature/Animals 4% (1 hour)/day
Activities 2% (0.5 hours)/day

Imagination/Creativity 13% (3 hours)/day
Socialising 2% (0.5 hours)/day
Songs/Rhymes 6% (1.5 hours)/day

Source: BabyTV daily EPG for May 2010

The full schedule along with more than 70 others is available at www.asiacontentwatch.com

Asian royalty under the small screen spotlight

Asian royalty has a new profile on the international content stage via a five-part co-production, *Asia's Monarchies*.

The show, part of Off the Fence's new slate at MIPTV this year, has already sold in Canada and discussions elsewhere are well under way, says Tony Chow, Off The Fence's Singapore-based managing director for Asia.

Asia's Monarchies was made by Off the Fence for Singapore's 24-hour news channel, Channel NewsAsia, and aired earlier this year.



Asia's Monarchies

The series focuses on five of Asia's remaining monarchies – Japan, Cambodia, Nepal, Bhutan and Brunei. Thailand was excluded because of the country's laws related to the royal family.

Asia's Monarchies is part of Off the Fence's three-year bid to boost Asian subjects and content in its library. Chow says Asian topics now make up about 30% of Off the Fence's global library.

CCTV revamps English news channel

China's state broadcaster, China Central Television, has relaunched its English-language news channel, CCTV-9, as CCTV News.

The revamp, unveiled at the end of April, also involves a new line up and fresh scheduling.

CCTV said the channel "is China's contribution to greater diversity and wider perspectives in the global information flow... provides international audiences with a window into understanding China and the world at large".

CCTV News' line up includes global news shows, *News Update* and *News Hour*, as well as *China 24* and *Asia Today*, which focus on domestic and regional affairs.

The channel also airs *Biz Asia*, *Biz Talk*, *New Money*, *Culture Express*, and *Sports Scene*, along with travel, talk and magazine shows such as *Crossover*, where "hosts and guests of various backgrounds and experiences talk about issues throughout China," CCTV said.

From page 12: BabyTV

on exploring local co-production opportunities, says programming director Ron Isaak.

Programme highlights for the second half of 2010 include the July premiere of *Mice Builders* (104x5 mins), a 3D animated series created in HD and commissioned out of Spain; and August's *Zoe and the Animals* (10x5 mins), a programme entirely of songs about different animals.

BabyTV premieres *BabyHood* (20x5 mins) in September, an animation series based on channel mascots, including IP the butterfly as the main character. November's highlight is *Concertino* (20x5 mins), a live footage/animation series featuring orchestral musicians interlaced in an animated world in which they play their instruments.

Viewing peaks during early daytime (8am-10am) and in the afternoon from 4pm to 7pm. The highest viewership is on Wednesdays at 8am, currently airing *Charlie and the Numbers* (20x7 mins), a 3D animation adventure series of Charlie and his number friends in the Numbers of Kingdom.

Scheduling is arranged according to lifestyle/routines of families with young children. The aim is to allow parents to find educative content at any time, without having to tune in at set hours. Featuring CGI, 3D, 2D, live-action and puppets, programmes are mostly short-form episodes (five minutes on average) that run uninterrupted by commercials or promos.

During daytime hours, BabyTV features short programmes that focus on learning themes – through songs, stories, games and activities with loveable characters. Towards evening, BabyTV runs programmes with bedtime stories and songs. Late night slots are programmes offering soft music and gentle visuals to create a calming environment.

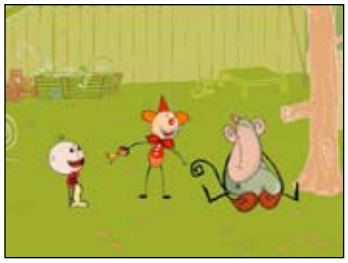
BabyTV has one regional feed for Asia. So far, the channel has carriage in Cambodia, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore, Indonesia, Maldives and the Middle East.

BabyTV also offers VOD service, BabyTV VOD, in some territories. On-demand packages are grouped into themes such as "Learning Colours", "Safari Animals" and "Guessing Games with the Egg Birds".

BabyTV has an active online business. The channel has added 'learning-centres' to babytv.com, where parents can find games and activities. Shows like *Zoe and the Animals*, *Oliver* (live footage, animation, spot animation, 30x6 mins), *Tulli* and *Yoyo the Magician* (animation, 20x5.5 mins) have full learning centres, while others have individual games and activities.



Mice Builders



Yoyo the Magician

Add-ons include mobile content and DVDs. Merchandising is being planned.

BabyTV also has a Facebook presence with about 7,279 fans.

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