

TBI Asia

President Trump:
TV industry reacts
to shock result
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Editor Stewart Clarke • stewart.clarke@knect365.com • @TBIstewart
Deputy editor Jesse Whittock • jesse.whittock@knect365.com • @TBI_Jesse
Sales manager Kate Roach • kate.roach@knect365.com
Art director Matthew Humberstone • matthew.humberstone@knect365.com

Published by KNect365 TMT, Maple House,
149 Tottenham Court Road, London W1T 7AD
Tel: +44 (0)20 7017 5000

e-mail: tbi@knect365.com **web:** www.tbivision.com

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Regulate to accumulate

Singaporean regulator the Media Development Authority merged with the country's information-communications body this year. Having taken a delegation of local companies to MIPCOM, Gabriel Lim, chief executive of new entity the IMDA, explains the vision for the organisation, why Netflix is welcome in Singapore, and how international companies can thrive there

One Animation, Monstrou Studio, ActiveTV Asia, Sunrise Entertainment and Ying Group were among a 14-strong Singaporean delegation at MIPCOM. Many producers, broadcasters and distributors will have recognised those names, but perhaps not the body they were in town with.

The Info-communications Media Development Authority officially formed weeks before the Cannes conference and market, upon the merger of the Infocomm Development Authority and the Media Development Authority, the latter of which has been bringing content companies to the attention of global TV markets for years.

The new body aims to bring together the emerging matrix of connected technologies (in healthcare, social services, management, real estate, start-ups and business, and more)

with Singapore's media industries. For television this means a new avenue of support for a variety of animation studios, local drama prodcos and unscripted television producers.

"Our mandate is to empower Singaporean companies with new opportunities," says Gabriel Lim, the former CEO of the MDA who is now boss of the IMDA.

"One reason why we decided to reorganise was the concept of convergence of infotech and media. They are coming together through social media and digital media – both sides are closer together.

"Singapore is generally quite a small market, but we do have lots of capability and talent," he continues. "We have very promising film producers and directors; and strong talent in games and games development. There are many niches in which we are strong, but we want to take a more global focus."

International television will play a big part in this new strategy. "We want to coproduce television content with partners from around the world, but we also want to remain a hub for international companies to use to set up Asian operations," says Lim. "They can come here and open up shop."

The MDA launched and supported various production funds and coproduction treaties over the years, and launched the Singapore Media Festival, which works with the Asia Television Forum & Market and the Singapore International Film Festival. The IMDA will continue with such initiatives, with global business remaining a key tenet. The likes of The Jim Henson Company and Discovery Networks Asia Pacific are among those active in the territory at present.

"As media evolves and new companies emerge, our mandate is to make sure we remain the partner of choice for those

companies around the world,” says Lim. “We want them to be part of our story, and at the same time make our work improve the lives of people in Singapore.”

The IMDA recently inked a coproduction pact with Discovery’s Asian arm, which will see the latter creating content in Singapore for mobile devices, linear channels, 4K and VR platforms, and offering support from the US to local producers, plus training and workshops.

There will be twelve 10-minute digital pilots as an early part of the initiative, which will run until the third quarter of next year.

The venture is worth around US\$6.8 million, with both sides putting in cash, though the exact split of investment has not been made public. What is known is that “Discovery Networks Asia Pacific is working on short-form content that will be exclusive to the region”, as Lim says.

“We are working on a few more similar deals that we can’t mention at the moment, but these are with international partners that will give us more scope and opportunity,” he adds.

With digital production a key focus, the IMDA has also struck up a partnership with Disney-owned multichannel operator Maker

Studios. This has seen bootcamp events bring together online content creators with Maker creatives to share ideas on production and audience building.

“The idea of broadcasting yourself through Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Periscope has become very important,” says Lim. “It can reach local audiences even if the quality is not as high [as linear broadcasting]. We partnered with Maker Studios to realise that.”

More broadly, the IMDA has taken a different tack to many of its neighbours by openly welcoming SVOD giant Netflix into the local market. In fact, Lim says, it went as far as changing regulation to make the conditions easier for the US-based digital player to start out in the territory.

“Many of our neighbours banned the service, or made it partner with local pay TV operators,” says Lim. “We decided not to do that, and instead embrace Netflix. We harmonised our regulations to allow it to operate legitimately.”

The rest, however, is up to Netflix, with strong local competition coming from the likes of pay TV operator PCCW’s subscription service Viu. There is plenty of scope for multiple SVOD players, with estimates from July suggesting around 86%

of the territory’s web users would regularly stream video. “There are many, many players challenging Netflix,” says Lim. “I expect HBO and Fox [among others] will launch their OTT services direct-to-consumer here when they are ready.”

Netflix will have a headstart, especially if it localises its offer in the same way it has done in Turkey and Poland. “We have started to see local studios and talent undertaking exclusive work for Netflix, which is also now interested in buying Singaporean catalogue programming for the local service,” says Lim.

As Netflix’s story in Singapore proves, the IMDA is one of the more active regulators in international television. The question is how it can achieve its watchdog duties and promote content companies at the same time. Lim, who became CEO of MDA in December 2014 and has held various government posts, believes he has an answer.

“We see regulation and development as two sides of the same coin,” he explains. “We have to create clear regulation and protect consumers and business, but we also have to create the means for business to grow. The regulation must have the sensibility to find a balance, and the sweet spot, between the two.”



Oddbods (see page 6)

Stories from Singapore

Below are some of the most headline-worthy titles from the Singaporean companies brought to MIPCOM. The full line-up comprised 650 hours and 40 shows, highlighting the depths of talent the territory has in its ranks. The IMDA's job is now to sell the story to the international market



celebrities as they are coached and cajoled by experts, and put through challenges. ActiveTV says the format has been “carefully developed” to create a “highly entertaining series”.

ODDBODS (Previous page)

One Animation's ultra-popular comedy shorts have become an online and offline phenomenon, selling to broadcasters including Teletoon+ in France, CiTV in the UK, Boomerang in various territories and Disney Channel in Asia; and amassing 170 million views on YouTube. The sketch-based show, created by *Bob the Builder* artist Richard Thomas for kids aged 4-to-9, follows seven characters who each have distinctive personalities. Prodcos One made headlines recently by hiring heavyweight producer John McKenna, who has in the past led studios for Disney, Warner Bros. and Fox. **TBI**

BARANGAY 143 ▲

An original animated series set in the world of street basketball about a youngster searching for a father who finds an unlikely family with a team of misfits. August Media Holdings coproduces with Philippines-based Synergy88 Entertainment Media, with the show slated for completion in 2017, and available in both English and Tagalog. August is also working with Epigram Books to adapt *The Adventures of Sam Sherlock*, aka Samuel Tan Cher Lock, or Singapore's greatest kid detective. A series is being lined up for 2018, beginning in three languages: English, Bahasa Melayu and Bahasa Indonesian.

CELEBRITY CAR WARS ►

Billed as combining “motoring insights with charismatic high-profile celebrities from across Asia”, the reality show is for History Asia and comes from ActiveTV Asia, the Singaporean arm of Australia's ActiveTV. Each episode runs to an hour, and follows journeys of guest



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On the move

TBI takes a look at the latest comings and goings in the international television business and reports on who's moving where

The executive chairman of MTG's digital MTGx division, **MATHIAS HERMANSSON**, is leaving the company. He has been at the European broadcaster since 1999, and had been tipped as a successor to CEO Jørgen Madsen Lindemann



Darrel James has left his role as COO of Amsterdam-based distributor Off the Fence after nearly ten years with the company. The experienced British exec decided to leave to return to the UK, and will look for new non-exec, consultancy and TV roles next year after some time out with his family

CRIS ABREGO will become the sole chairman and CEO of Endemol Shine North America and chairman of Endemol Shine Americas after it emerged Charlie Corwin was unexpectedly exiting the 21st Century Fox-backed production giant. Corwin is believed to be close to joining *Mars* coproducer Imagine Entertainment as CEO



The UK division of Lionsgate has hired former ITV drama boss Steve November to head its British scripted TV efforts. November was with commercial network ITV for 16 years before leaving as new director of television Kevin Lygo put in place his own senior executive team. The BBC's Polly Hill has since replaced November at ITV



Veteran TV3 exec **MARK CAULTON** is exiting the New Zealand-based broadcaster and moving to the UK. Caulton has been with TV3 for 18 years, rising to his most recent post, director of programming at channel parent Mediaworks. Ben Quinn and Matt Barthow are among those dividing up his duties



Nice Entertainment Group's Finnish prodco, Moskito Television, has named Riina Kullas as its new chief executive after the founder and previous CEO, Roope Lehtinen, announced his exit. Lehtinen is leaving to launch a formats and drama development company

Former UKTV commissioner **JANE ROGERSON** and IWC exec producer Ross Harper have launched British indie Red Sky Productions. The prodco's investors include former All3Media boss Steve Morrison, his fellow All3 co-creator and ITV programming exec David Liddiment, Wall to Wall founder Alex Graham and the Channel 4 Alpha Fund



Lisa Purdy is leaving her director post at Canadian children's channels BBC Kids and Knowledge Kids. Purdy has been with Knowledge Network since 2011, but Rudy Buttignol will now take over operational responsibility of BBC Kids specialty network, adding those duties to his president and CEO posts

Ex-Endemol Shine Group president **TIM HINCKS** and former ITV programming chief Peter Fincham have established a production venture, Expectation Entertainment. The prodco name is likely based on that of their band, No Expectations

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Trump's America: media holds its breath

Donald Trump's surprise US election win sent shockwaves around the world, with the former reality TV star now set to become the most powerful politician in the world. In the aftermath of the surprise result, TBI's Stewart Clarke and Jesse Whittock spoke to producers, distributors and entertainment analysts. This is what the industry said

photo: Cage Strickmore

Irrespective of political affiliations – and most in US TV and media are liberal and left of centre – Donald Trump's election win was a shock, defying the pollsters and many observers.

In a situation that resembles the aftermath of the UK's decision to exit the European Union – Trump himself described it as 'Brexit Plus, Plus, Plus' – the initial reaction has been that there will be a period of uncertainty as the world waits to see if, and how, the new president delivers on his campaign trail pledges.

"There is some uncertainty as to what the election result means for the TV business and for our members," says David Lyle, a veteran of

US TV and now the chief of Pact US, the trade body for independent American producers. "That resonates with producers and channels that are already seeing wider uncertainty, and having to work out how to create sustainable businesses in a changing world."

For some US producers, which are mostly based on the east and west coasts, it is also a moment of reflection and to ask whether, in light of the result, they really know their audience. "A lot of producers are asking how they could have got it so wrong – we are supposed to know the audience," says one seasoned industry exec. "The only one who got it right is Michael Moore. We know [Trump] – he was part of our

business – and a lot of people got to know him only too well."

Another LA-based exec says: "People want to make something the audience responds to, but a lot of people here live in a bubble and aren't in touch with what people in the rest of the country are doing day-to-day, and what they are thinking about."

Media, telecoms and communications analysts are divided on what a Trump White House means for the markets. Specifically, there are concerns over internet and media ownership, net neutrality, regulation, mergers and acquisitions, international distribution, and currency issues. Top of mind for

international television companies is what the hard-line rhetoric on foreign trade will mean in reality.

If Trump's administration does make trading with powerful nations such as China (which now has investments in Tinseltown companies STX Entertainment, Dick Clark Productions, Lionsgate, and Legendary Entertainment) more difficult, there will be repercussions for existing media agreements and initiatives, says Ovum managing director Aniel Rakity.

"Entertainment content has historically been one of the US's most significant exports, not just for the revenues it generates, but for the 'soft power' it represents. Moreover, non-US revenues for these sectors now exceed domestic ones," he says. "The ascendancy of President-elect Trump, however, could spell trouble for the media and entertainment industry in the US and beyond.

"Trump's rhetoric on ripping up trade deals may not cut it with the tough negotiators US content providers must deal with outside the States, and could yet jeopardise the carefully negotiated deals that Hollywood has built in China, for example.

"The further opening – or not – of the Chinese market looks set to be a major story of the next five years, and US content providers will be anxious to ensure that doors remain open amid wider trade talks."

Domestically, Trump's relationship with the media will, in the short-term at least, be defined by whether he kiboshes the AT&T and Time Warner merger. S&P Global Market Intelligence notes that Trump claimed deals such as the US\$107 billion agreement between the leading US telco and entertainment player "destroy democracy". He has also taken aim at Comcast's multi-billion deal for NBCUniversal in 2011, saying he would look to 'dismantle' the company.

Having been close to NBC when it broadcast *The Apprentice*, relations between Trump and the broadcast net are frosty at best. The latter said it was severing ties with him in 2015, in the wake of inflammatory comments about Mexican immigrants. Trump's response was that NBC was "weak" and "foolish".

Within Time Warner, meanwhile, staff at news net CNN are unlikely to be feeling comfortable given the president-elect's attacks on the Turner news net, which he dubbed the 'Clinton News Network'.

"Trump's public stance against major media mergers, especially those involving the vertical integration of distributors and programmers, could have significant repercussions for the industry as a whole," New York-based S&P said in a note released days after the election results. S&P Global analysts noted that a raft of deals are in the works, including a mooted Disney deal for Netflix and/or Twitter, the CBS-Viacom recombination, but that Trump's election could threaten these. "All in all, the media and communications industries could be standing on the cusp of a bevy of deal activity, the likes of which have not been seen in some time," said S&P Global.

Ampere Analysis directors Richard Broughton and Guy Bisson argue there may be upside for globally-minded US media firms if the dollar weakens amid market uncertainty over the Trump administration.

"On the face of it [the election result] would seem to negatively impact US companies, and for domestic operations this would be true," they say. "However, for firms with significant international assets this can be a positive effect. The international parts of the business will be higher in value, there could also be the potential for US media companies to push further into international markets to take advantage of this effect."

This could well be true, though major media companies are already feeling the burn of the UK's decision to leave the EU, which could offset some of the upside Ampere is predicting.

Much attention in the US is tuned to what President Trump does with regard to Mexico and immigration. To the North, however, Canadians are asking what Trump means for them.

"Even though Canada and the US are very close, there is no official copro treaty, so in the short term I don't see any major impact on the Canadian industry," says Sophie Feron, founder of Quebec-based producer and distributor Media Ranch. "The weak Canadian dollar could bring Americans here to shoot – historically that has happened. That could prompt the US to compete with tax breaks and benefits as a reaction."

Several producers noted that during times when a sizable chunk of the population feels anxious – in this case Democrats, moderate Republicans and Clinton supporters – there is a glut of feelgood programming as viewers seek comfort viewing. Feron predicts this, as well as more of a materialist take on content with Trump running the country. "There will be a lot of comedy because people need to laugh," she says. "And we could see another *Dallas* or *Dynasty*, with the creative being driven back to the 'greed is good' mantra of the 1980s." **TBI**

POLLING GOOGLE

Tim Skinner from our sister publication Telecoms.com asks whether Google can succeed where TV pollsters failed in predicting election winners

In the aftermath of 2016's second historical political event, we asked whether Google search data predicted both Brexit and Donald Trump's win.

In the UK, the view from the outside reminds us all of Brexit. In each instance, the majority of people were left surprised by the outcome, and consternation stemmed from the pollsters' inability to accurately determine the general attitude of the people.

On each occasion, pollsters predicted narrow wins for the eventual losers, presumably based on the opinions of the more outspoken minority.

Political occasions such as this have such significance that there is not much tolerance for inaccuracies, and since the election, Google has revealed how search trends leaned towards either Trump or Clinton as the election campaign reached its climax over the last six weeks.

There are data protection issues, which vary from country to country, but, from a purely observational perspective, could Google predict the outcome of an election before the vote has even happened?

Data from Google illustrates search results for the various US candidates, sampled over a week-long period. Ignoring an obvious spike on the morning of November 9, it shows Trump's online popularity surged ahead of his rivals in the five days previous, a period in which a significant chunk of voters only began swatting up in the 72-48 hours before polling day.



IPCN's live stream dreams

Live streaming have become big business in China, with hundreds of new apps allowing connected consumers to interact, and through advanced payment systems, reward the online talent directly. Rebecca Yang's IPCN is bringing its TV savvy to the emerging sector

The money that the stars of China's live streaming scene can make prove it is already big business. Rebecca Yang, CEO of Anglo-Chinese content company IPCN, says the most popular girls – much of the content is young female bloggers – can earn US\$13,000 a night.

A scene has sprung up around these young, attractive bloggers, collectively referred to as 'Wang Hong'. They have a distinctive look, often attempting to look like characters from the world of Japanese animation. But the online revolution goes further than fashionable, big-eyed girls eliciting virtual gifts (represented in cute, graphical form) from consumers, with local and international FMCG brands increasingly getting involved.

IPCN is leading the charge for the profes-

sional producers in this space. Hitherto, the firm has been known for getting away a raft of Western formats in China, but it has now started looking at opportunities to capture live streaming eyeballs.

"Over the past twelve months or so, over 200 live streaming apps have popped up," says Yang. "There are a lot of young people asking for virtual gifts and that provides escapism, but we thought there had to be more to live streaming than that, so we decided to be innovative and create something new."

In the first instance that was *Nice Intern*, a constructed reality show set in IPCN's Shanghai office. The set-up saw IPCN create a fictional live streaming division within the company and advertise for new interns each week. The new recruits enter the crazy world of this new start-up business, with fixed-rig cameras capturing

and streaming the action for eight hours a day, five days a week, for a three-week period.

Sponsors included smart TV brand Whaley, fashion brand I.AM X, and food and skincare brands Marumata and OSM respectively.

Generating such a large number of live hours presents producers with a tough task, IPCN found, with a constant demand for new narrative and action, and an increasing number of storylines and people to follow.

"It's challenging; you need to really plan it advance because there is no editing," Yang says. "When it comes to live streaming you can really get found out if you get it wrong, and then people will say your show is fake."

Nice Intern peaked with 1.7 million viewers and averaged between 300,000 and 700,000. The numbers, by Chinese standards, were modest, but good enough to convince IPCN to do more live streamed programming, this time with internet giant Youku Tudou co-funding.

The follow-up to *Nice Intern* is another reality show, *White Collar Boxing*. This time there is just 90 minutes of footage a day, and there is a presenter. The show follows a group of would-be fighters training and competing to take part in a live streamed white collar boxing match. Their coaches and viewers decide who progresses. As well as the live component, there is a series of constructed reality webisodes, in which the lives of the contestants are explored.

Yang admits that the live streaming push comes as regulation and wider market forces make the international formats business tough in China. A dispute surrounding the local version of *The Voice*, a show IPCN initially introduced to the country, hasn't helped. Some informed observers say the effect has been to make the local market more insular, and likely to copy a Western format, a state of affairs from which the industry hoped it had moved on from.

Another issue is the lack of new breakout entertainment and talent formats that could be taken into China from international markets.

Will IPCN be able to use newfound live streaming expertise and formats outside of China? There are challenges, not least that not all countries have the advanced in-app payment systems required. "The technology is so advanced in China, and we wanted to see what was possible," Yang says. "But Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg has talked about the potential of live streaming, and the culture gap between millennials around the world is narrower than with previous generations." **TBI**

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Fishy goings on at Technicolor

With *The Deep* faring well around the world, Technicolor is aiming to create another aquatic hit with *Big Fish, Little Shark*, which it is making with *Tumble Leaf* prodco Bix Pix Entertainment

Producers are fond of saying good ideas can come from anywhere, and the adage proved true in the case of *Big Fish, Little Shark*. The spark for the project was a sketch from the offspring of a Technicolor employee of, appropriately, a big fish and a little shark.

Suitably impressed, Technicolor VP and creative head of animation Steven Wendland went out and partnered with Bix Pix Entertainment, the hot stop-motion prodco behind Amazon hit *Tumble Leaf*, to create a series.

"Someone here at Technicolor brought in a sketch that their kid had wanted them to show me, and I said, 'that's a series' – an uptight little shark and an easygoing big fish," says Wendland. "We then started the process of finding a partner and are now working with Kelli Bixler and [her team at] Bix Pix."

Technicolor is hoping to have early stage conversations with other partners at Kidscreen in the new year. "It's in development, it could be a 6-to-11s comedy, or could end up being an older kids or family comedy," says Wendland.

Technicolor's other water-based show, *The*

Deep, provides a solid template for taking a risk and getting a hit series away.

"It was a fun property with great characters and stories; that wasn't an issue," says Wendland. "But we were bringing something to market that there wasn't a huge craving for. We hoped that that would work in our favour and help it stand out, and we were right."

The series, which was based on the Tom Taylor and James Brouwer graphic novel, was commissioned by the ABC and Seven in Australia, and then taken by Netflix for the US and CBBC in the UK among others. Wendland likens the show to an underwater *Star Trek*. "The 'aquanauts' go on missions in a big sub that is not unlike the Enterprise," he says.

Season two of *The Deep*, which is produced by Technicolor, A Stark and DHX Media, has now been greenlit. The new 13x30mins run will play on the same roster of channels as season one, with DHX handling international sales. Nerd Corps had originally produced the show before becoming part of DHX, which made the latter the obvious sales house for it.

The Canada-based distributor has now



Someone brought in a sketch that their kid had wanted them to show me, and I said, 'that's a series' **Steven Wendland**

shopped it to broadcasters, including YLE in Finland, SVT in Sweden, NRK in Norway and Panda in Portugal.

Wendland says Technicolor will put two shows into development next year. As well as *Big Fish, Little Shark*, there is *Bear, Bud & Boo*, which is a 2D show about three bears, one of whom is actually a boy wearing a bear outfit. Aimed at 4-to-7s, Technicolor is working with Brown Bag Films on the show.

It has also optioned *Supersaurus 7*, a new comedy adventure about a superhero dinosaur, from *Misery Bear* co-creator Chris Hayward.

Other development priorities are simple ideas for preschool, and older-skewing shows for boys. A water theme is not obligatory. **TBI**

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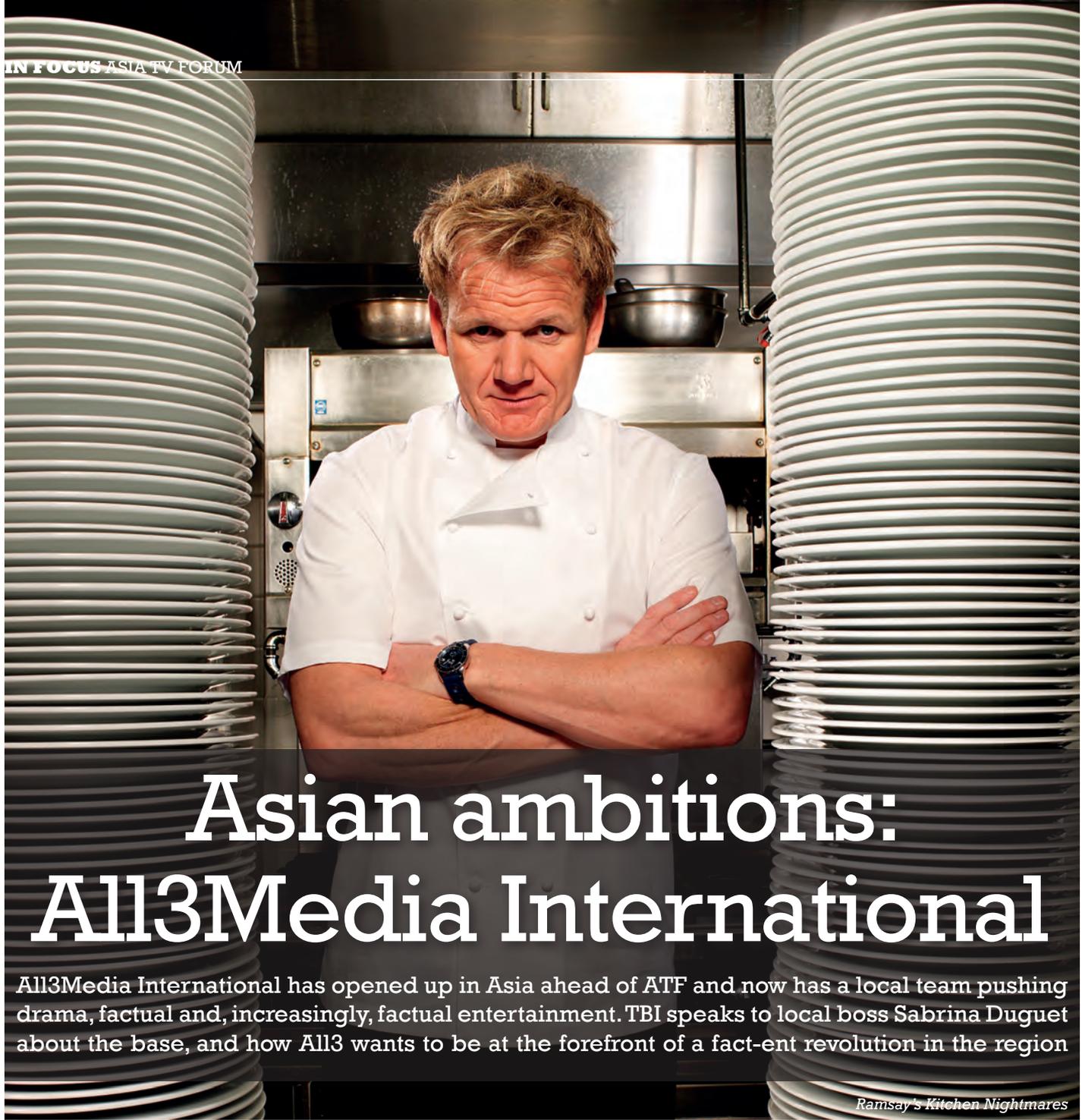
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Asian ambitions: All3Media International

All3Media International has opened up in Asia ahead of ATF and now has a local team pushing drama, factual and, increasingly, factual entertainment. TBI speaks to local boss Sabrina Duguet about the base, and how All3 wants to be at the forefront of a fact-ent revolution in the region

Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares

All3Media's new Asian office is just two days old when, in mid-November, TBI speaks to Sabrina Duguet, the former All3Media International formats chief who is running the new operation.

The intention of getting boots on the ground in Asia gained traction at All3Media when it moved from private equity ownership a few years ago, she explains.

"The idea had been in people's minds for some time, and became more urgent when Discovery and Liberty bought us," she says.

"That allowed us to plan projects for the long term, and they asked us to look at expansion and where we wanted to grow the business."

The launch also follows a wider structural change at All3Media International that has seen responsibilities divided up along regional, rather than genre, lines. The new Asian base will be shopping factual, factual entertainment, and drama accordingly. With a catalogue well stocked with fact-ent, it is in prime position as the genre starts to take off in the region.

Talent and studio formats remain popular, but buyers and commissioners are now willing

to talk about fact-ent too, according to Duguet. "It is still new in the region," she says. "I would have said Japan was one of the most unlikely territories in the region to do it, but we have now done *Undercover Boss* and *Gogglebox* there. It was completely new for them."

Japanese public broadcaster NHK piloted *Undercover Boss* – the Studio Lambert format that sees a company chief going back to the floor incognito – before committing to a full series. "It's an opportunity," Duguet says. "We know if *Undercover Boss* can work in Japan it can work elsewhere.

“What’s changed with fact-ent is that people are willing to talk about it. Before it was all about gameshows and talent shows, but now people know it can work. There’s a shift in the industry.”

NHK has also run *Gogglebox* as a special, and local versions of the Studio Lambert show have also been made in Mongolia and South Korea.

All3 faced the choice most international companies are presented with when launching an office in southeast Asia: Hong Kong or Singapore? It chose the latter, setting up in the One George Street skyscraper in the centre of town, placing it close to the pan-regional international channels that have a bases nearby.

As well as fact-ent doors opening, the All3 Asian team also want to take advantage of being new in town, and having clear run at a lot of the titles in the catalogue.

“Asia has never been a focus territory for us, so we never had a team dedicated to the region,” Duguet says. “That means a lot of our content and key brands are unexploited in the region. It’s an open door.”

Her team includes Kit Yow, the former 8TV Malaysia staffer who has joined as sales manager, and Alexander Euler, who came across from FremantleMedia’s local office.

The new team is hoping to cook up some Asian business for Gordon Ramsay shows, and content from the celebrity chef’s new prodco, Studio Ramsay. Endemol Shine cooking competition juggernaut *Masterchef* is now on Lifetime in the region, and All3 wants to push the likes of *Kitchen Nightmares* to Asian buyers (the show is from All3-backed Optomen and is part of the sales push after Optomen’s shows were added to the wider All3 library).

To that end, and to mark the opening of the new HQ, there will be an ATF event at Ramsay’s Bread Street Kitchen restaurant. This, like ATF itself, is in the Marina Bay Sands hotel complex in Singapore, and though the chef is filming in LA he will send a video message.

Through its work with China Media Management Inc. (CMMI) in recent years, All3 has broken shows in China. Duguet says sales increased four-fold last year, and All3Media



“We are a British company and production group, but we want this to be a two-way street with Asia”
Sabrina Duguet

International CEO Louise Pedersen says opening up a Singapore base was a natural next step for the distributor.

“Over the last few years, we’ve had significant interest in our catalogue in the region – it’s worth noting we’ve had four entertainment shows running in China over the last few years for example, and we have made major inroads with key broadcasters such as NHK in Japan,” says Pedersen, who rejoined All3 this year.

“It’s a very dynamic industry and continent. We have learnt a lot through the adaptations of our shows in region, and we are looking to work more closely with local broadcasters.”

the first-ever ATF Formats Pitch at the market. All3Media America boss Greg Lipstone and All3Media International marketing chief Rachel Glaister are judging export-friendly formats from Asian producers. Asif Zubairy, commissioning editor of entertainment for ITV and Deborah Sargeant, chief creative officer of Second Star Productions, which is part of the All3-backed Objective Media Group, will round out the panel.

If formats are fertile ground for international distributors in Asia, UK drama has traditionally been a hard sell beyond Australia and New Zealand (where All3 has its only prodco in the region, *The Brokenwood Mysteries* producer South Pacific Pictures).

New platforms are, however, opening up scripted TV. “Drama does well in New Zealand and Australia, but can be hard in Asia,” says Duguet. “There are, however, new VOD platforms creating new ways of doing business and new windowing opportunities.”

Clearly, All3 wants traction across all genres – from British cop shows to global fact-ent formats. The first steps will, however, be about making new friends, as well as simply hitting the numbers.

“If we can prove in the first 6-to-8 months that we have reached out and done deals with players who we haven’t worked with before, that will be a sign of growth,” Duguet says. “It’s not just about revenue.” **TBI**



Gogglebox Mongolia

Asian ambitions: Keshet International



Gary Pudney joined Keshet International last year to run its Asian office. He says the company increased regional sales three-fold this year, and can do the same in 2017. He tells TBI about plans to expand the Asian operations beyond Hong Kong, and setting up in Singapore and India.

Having launched in Asia in 2015, Keshet International is about to ramp up regional activity further, with 2017 set to be a big year.

Gary Pudney joined Keshet International last October from Echo Rights to run local operations, and is about to add to his four-strong team. The initiative came from the top.

“Asia is a major priority for us and if last year we focused on expanding our footprint – launching more than a dozen shows scripted and non-scripted – this year we’re looking to go

With Pudney in Hong Kong, a Singapore office is being readied, to put Keshet International next to the big pan-regional channel operators.

With a landmark scripted format deal for *Prisoners of War* with Star Plus in India (see p.25) and *Rising Star* heading to Viacom 18’s Colors channel, a Mumbai office will also open in 2017, with the search on for an exec with both sales and production experience. Furthermore, next year will see the local team expand to seven in total, with a regional marketing expert being added to the Singapore- and India-based execs.

“We’ll appoint a senior producer and set up in Singapore,” Pudney says. “That person will have a remit to work with the regional broadcasters. The proximity to the pan-regional players is the primary reason for being there, but they will also quickly look at other opportunities in the Philippines, Indonesia and elsewhere. We will have someone in India too,” he adds. “It’s right up there in our priorities.”

Prisoners of War in India gives Keshet International a valuable asset in the region, with high expectations for sales of the local version. “We expect to proliferate finished tape sales not just in Asia, but the rest of the world,” says Pudney.

Keshet has also got two drama formats in the works in China, in partnership with local prodco Croton Media. A remake of comedy drama *Traffic Light* is in advanced development, and *Loaded*, which was recently set up as a UK-US

show with Channel 4 and AMC, is also being developed locally.

In terms of drama, Pudney says Asia is opening up. “There is a genuine interest in looking outside of [local borders],” he says. “There is a millennial effect, whereby there is a huge demand for content and a desire to binge programming,” he adds. “The market has become more open and sophisticated around the region.”

KI also has international rights to South Korean romantic comedy *You Will Love Me*, having scooped the finished version and format of the Jidam-produced series, and also sells Chinese talent show *Not a Star Yet* as a format. “Asia is a two-way street,” says Shtruzman. “We’re not only bringing international IP, but looking to export Asian IP as well.”

In terms of format sales, highlights include *Rising Star*, which is with Town TV in Cambodia and heading into its second season on RCTI in Indonesia. *Who’s on Top* has also gone to RCTI. In China, a local version of *Trade Up* has gone to CCTV, and *Master Class* to Beijing Satellite TV and Yunnan TV (pictured).

Shtruzman says the scene is set to go deeper. “With shows like *Rising Star Indonesia* winning high-profile awards, *Master Class China* in its third season and the cinematic *Prisoners Of War* adaption in India, we have some great momentum and an excellent foundation to continue expanding our business there.” **TBI**



“We’ll appoint a senior producer and set up in Singapore. We will have someone in India too”
Gary Pudney

deeper, setting up production and development hubs,” says Alon Shtruzman, CEO of Israel-based Keshet International.

“I’ve been on the ground, and over the course of the year covered the primary and secondary markets, and done deals in most of them,” Pudney says. “We have done tape, format, scripted format deals, and acquisitions, and local development is in the works.”

Asia's Television Forum

Yeow Hui Leng, senior project director of Asia TV Forum & Market and ScreenSingapore organiser Reed Exhibitions tells TBI about this year's edition of ATF

How many attendees will be in town?

We are expecting some 5,200 attendees this year, comparable to that in 2015. In 2015, 5,011 attendees from 60 countries attended ATF.

In addition, the ATF market floor is at its biggest to date with over 700 exhibiting companies from around the world.

In addition to key Asian brands, attendees will be able to access fresh content from major studios such as CBS Studios International, Disney, Twentieth Century Fox Television Distribution, MGM Worldwide Television, NBCUniversal Television, Paramount Pictures, Sony Pictures Television and Warner Bros. International Television.

The market will also welcome the largest number of 19 official pavilions, representing the likes of Australia, Canada, China, France, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Taiwan and the United Kingdom.

What are the key growth areas?

With more consumers taking to over-the-top platforms, ATF has received an increasing number of OTT players – including telecommunication providers with OTT offerings – looking to purchase fresh content for their services.

Additionally, the number of Southeast Asian buyers continues to rise. This year, we have the most comprehensive representation from Vietnam yet, with key broadcasters, telecommunications providers and pay TV providers, as well as distributors and agencies.

To enable content producers to meet Southeast Asian buyers' needs, new Market Focus sessions at the ATF conference will shed light into this important market, and on Indochina.

What is there in terms of digital outreach?

As the industry attempts to incorporate digital innovation into individual manoeuvres, ATF 2016 will present Digital@ATF at the market. This new zone houses the Digital Corridor, a showcase of the latest evolutions of content, along with various technologies that support this.

Then at the Transmedia Producer Workshop sessions, some of the most avant-garde players in the virtual reality space will discuss exceptionally progressive productions.

What are the conference highlights?

ATF aims to provide a platform where attendees can tap on the brightest minds internationally, with topics tailored to the region. Each year, we place emphasis on gathering the most relevant and current industry leaders, so that delegates can obtain the keys to navigating today's dynamic Asia content market, as they discover the latest trends and opportunities to leverage.

Market research agencies such as McKinsey & Company and PwC

note that more consumers are taking to over-the-top services, thus rattling the traditional content business. With market disruptors being the new normal today, attendees will gain invaluable acumen and outlooks from movers and shakers at the ATF C-Level Summit 2016: Managing the Business of Disruptors (December 6). Sessions will see decision makers discuss the very real issues of business today, as the industry is compelled to steer into the online world – a realm set to continue in its disruption of traditional content consumption and monetisation.

Kicking off the Summit are Asia television leaders David Fernando Audy, president director of PT Media Nusantara Citra, and Yong-Ju Jeon, CEO of D'Live and IHQ, who will deliver keynotes that address today's evolving landscape in the digital realm.

“ATF has received an increasing number of OTT players looking to purchase fresh content for their platforms”
Yeow Hui Leng



What are you doing in terms of focusing on specific territories?

Amongst Asian markets with immense potential is Indochina – comprising Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam – whose gross domestic product growth is expected to outpace the whole of Asia in the years to come.

Similarly, strong economic development in Southeast Asia has spread wealth; leading to market research firm Nielsen's forecast that the middle-class population will more than double to 400 million by 2020.

On the back of such an awakening, ATF will – for the first time – place a spotlight on China, Indochina and Southeast Asia, three territories not to be ignored.

Which execs from the region will be there?

Key players within China's entertainment content industry will provide insights at two sessions held on 8 December 2016. At 'Navigating China: What You Always Wanted to Know', new regulations will be decoded and trade secrets unveiled by well-established panelists: Wang Yi, co-founder of Media Caravan, Michel Rodrigue, founder and CEO of The Format People (USA), and Yuan Li, CCO of IPCN. **TBI**



Asia SVOD set for take-off

A raft of new local launches as well as the arrival of the major international players will see the SVOD market more than double in value over the next five years. TBI takes an exclusive look at Digital TV Research's forecasts, and identifies at the battles brewing between the local and international players

Netflix has moved into the Asia Pacific region, launching in a raft of countries as part of this year's global rollout. Amazon is likely coming too, and is prepping its international launch. However, local players are fighting back, with

existing pay TV operators and telcos getting into the streaming game. The activity at a local- and pan-regional level means there will be huge growth in the sector. Asia Pacific SVOD revenues for 17 key countries will increase by US\$4 billion, from US\$3.34 billion in 2016, to US\$7.31

billion in 2021. China will overtake Japan to become the SVOD revenue leader in 2017, according to Digital TV Research, which has just issued its Asia Pacific SVOD Forecasts. China alone will add US\$1.69 billion in revenues between 2016 and 2021, with Japan up by US\$708 million.

NETFLIX'S CHINA CONUNDRUM

It is not unusual that China, with its huge population and number TV homes, leads the way in terms of revenue forecasts in an Asia-Pac TV industry report. What is unusual is that, in an SVOD sector ordinarily dominated by Netflix, the US company won't be part of the picture.

The Netflix-China story mirrors that of several other large media companies that have tried to muscle into the Chinese market, and like the earlier efforts of Disney and News Corp. (now 21st Century Fox), it has been a case of one step forwards, two steps back.

Earlier this year the Bloomberg wire service reported that, following CEO Reed Hastings assertion it was exploring its Chinese options, the US-listed company was talking to local partners including Wasu Media about a possible launch. More recent noises from the company suggest these plans are on ice.

"The regulatory environment for foreign digital content services in China has become challenging," Netflix wrote in a letter to shareholders in October, noting it will focus on selling content into China rather than launching a full service.

"We expect revenue from this licensing will be modest," the company said. "We still have a long-term desire to serve the Chinese people directly, and hope to launch our service in China eventually."

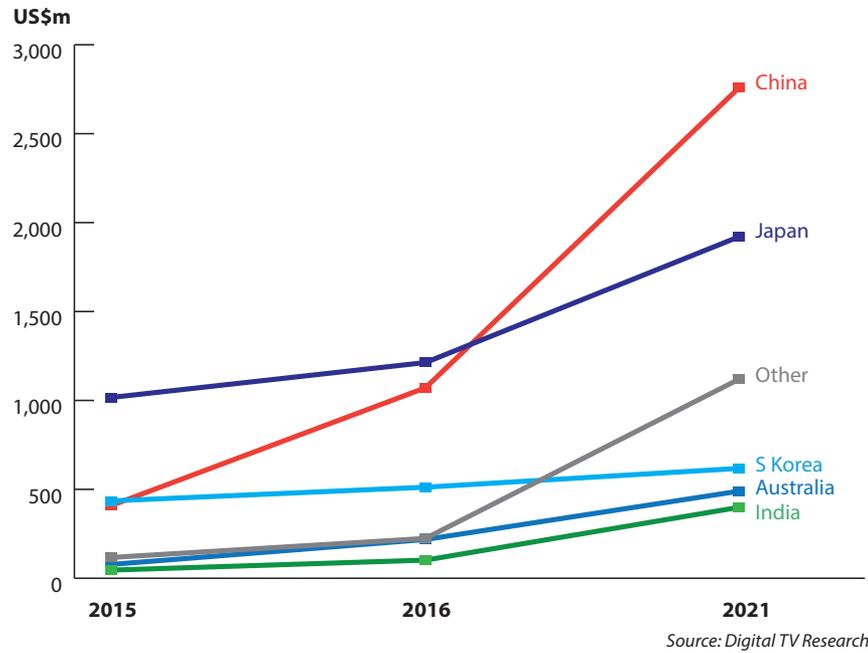
Netflix's wider Asian prospects are much brighter, although most of the growth will come from the more developed, higher income countries. The pricing of the service in less affluent territories, meanwhile, is expected to hamper growth.

"Netflix is forecast to have 7.59 million subscribers in the [Asia-Pac] region by 2021, up from 3.17 million at end-2016," says Digital TV Research principal analyst Simon Murray. "Australia, Japan, Korea and New Zealand will together account for nearly three-quarters of the total. Netflix is considered expensive in most other countries."

Digital TV Research suggests that Netflix will be content to remain a high-end premium service, with fewer subs, in many Asian markets, with its attention focused on a select few territories in the region.

"We believe that Netflix has already identified its key Asian markets," Murray says.

ASIA PACIFIC SVOD REVENUES BY COUNTRY (US\$ MILLION)



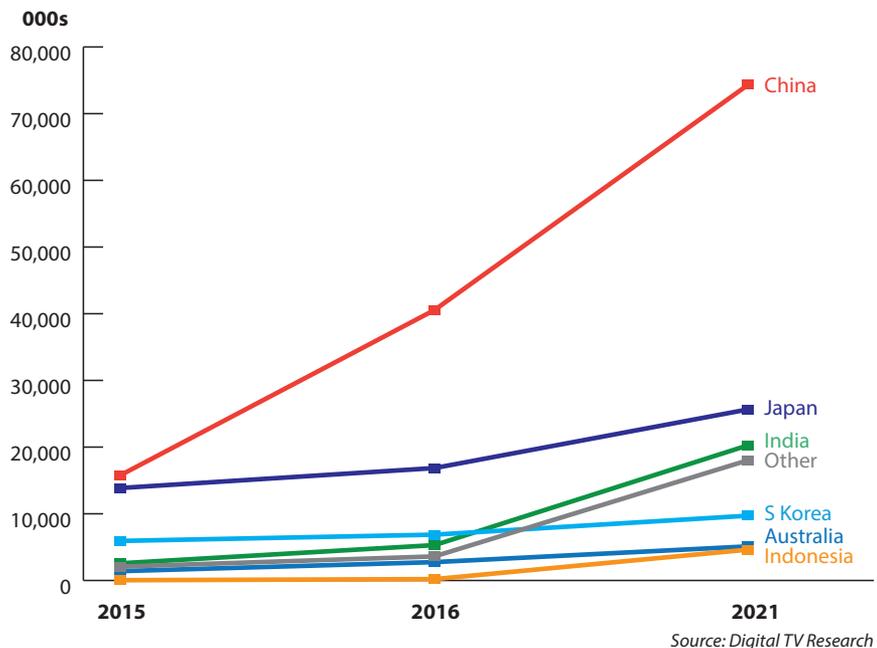
"Netflix is likely to remain the market leader in Australasia. It is adapting its offer in Japan and South Korea. We do not, however, expect the company to do much more in the rest of Asia.

"In fact, Netflix is not expected to ever launch as a standalone service in China, partly due to the government's stance and partly due to the already well-established local players."

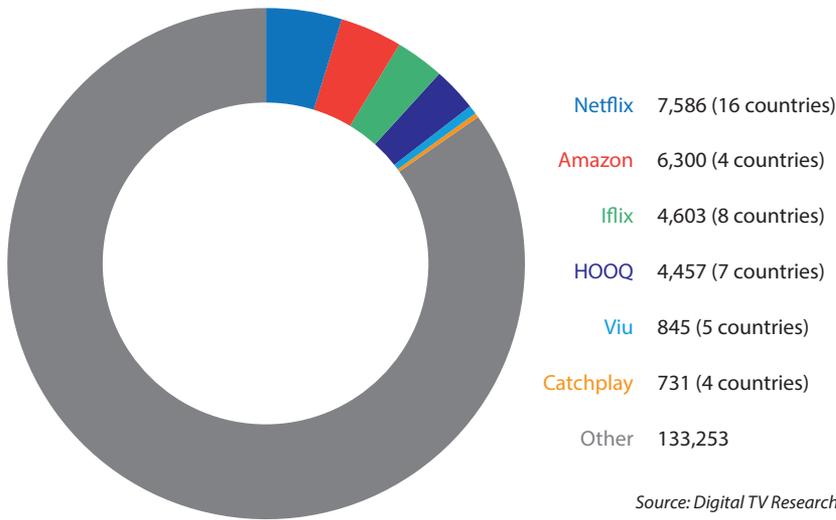
AMAZON'S ASIA AMBITIONS

Amazon, as TBI goes to press, has confirmed it is about to launch in India, although will not say when. The Prime service rolled out in late July and the VOD component is set to follow, with local press tipping it to heavily undercut Netflix with extremely low annual fees (and

ASIA PACIFIC SVOD SUBSCRIBERS BY COUNTRY (000)



ASIA PACIFIC SVOD SUBSCRIBERS BY OPERATOR IN 2021



an even cheaper introductory offer), versus a Netflix’s RS500-800 (US\$7.40-US\$11.80) monthly cost.

The content acquisition strategy has been mostly focused on movies, with the e-commerce giant locking in deals with film producers and distributors V Creations, Vishesh Films, Dharmesh Productions and T Series among others.

Clearly Amazon is mindful of the importance of local content, with Netflix often criticised for being a US service programmed with American programming.

The local players are, however, dismissive of the US companies’ prospects. A+E/TV18 boss Avinash Kaul recently told TBI: “Netflix doesn’t have the type of content people want and would need to produce [locally] to compete.”

Viacom18 boss Sudhanshu Vats agreed and added that local players will be reluctant to license programming to the US SVOD players. “We do 10,000 hours a year, and won’t give [content] to an aggregator for a short-term gain,” he said.

Turner’s regional chief Siddarh Jain added: “Many [local] broadcasters have started to hold back content for their own SVOD platforms and catch-up services.”

Amazon, Netflix and other established players will grow strongly despite this, but still only account for a small piece of the overall streaming pie.

“Although Netflix, Amazon, Iflix, HOOQ and Viu will enjoy rapid growth, they will

collectively only account for 16% of the region’s SVOD subscribers by 2021,” says Murray.

BEYOND THE BIG FIVE

As in western Europe, there is ‘big five’ in Asia, comprising Australia, China, India, Japan and South Korea. Looking ahead, however, a large chunk of the regional SVOD growth will come from outside of this group.

The ‘other’ category, comprising territories outside of the big five, accounted for SVOD

revenues of US\$117 million last year, and will generate turnover of US\$224 million this year. That total will increase five-fold to US\$1.12 billion by 2021.

“It’s worth noting that the 12 countries outside the big five will add \$896 million in revenues between 2016 and 2021,” says Murray. “This will quintuple their total; showing that growth will be greater beyond the main countries.”

SMARTPHONES DRIVING SUBS

The Asia Pacific region will have 157.78 million SVOD subscribers by 2021, up from 41.68 million in 2015 and 76.12 million expected by end-2016. The total will nudge 100 million by end-2017. Rapid smartphone subs growth means China will command 47% of the 2021 total – up from 38% in 2015. From the 82 million SVOD subs additions between now and 2021, China will supply 34 million, Japan nine million and India 15 million.

By 2021, 17.5% of the region’s TV households will subscribe to an SVOD platform, up from only 5.1% by end-2015 and 9.1% expected by end-2016. Penetration rates in 2021 will vary from 53.5% in Australia (with four of the region’s countries above 50%) to 8.0% in Pakistan.

Low credit card ownership stifles take-up, but operators are investing in pre-paid options to circumvent this. **TBI**





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ATF Hot Picks



THE SHOW: *Meat & Greed*
THE PRODUCER: Mediacorp
THE BROADCASTER: Mediacorp Channel 5 (Singapore)
THE DISTRIBUTOR: Tricon Films & Television
THE CONCEPT: English-language food series celebrating the best meat dishes in Asia

Asian content is becoming much more palatable for Western buyers, and, as such, is increasingly a staple in Western distributors' catalogues. "There is lots of English-speaking programming being produced there," says Andrea Gorfolova, president of Canadian sales house Tricon Films & TV.

The distributor has picked up rights to *Meat & Greed*, a celebratory food series from Singapore that has been airing on Mediacorp Channel 5 for a number of years. Gorfolova says it is "not just" English-speaking hosts that make the series a good choice for factual channels, but also because the subject matter

is, well, tasty for broadcasters.

"Mediacorp has been producing lots of content in Asia, and has access to extraordinary talent, which helps the product to be high quality," says Gorfolova. "*Meat & Greed* is a title we love because it's a generally loved subject covered in a new way. It's not unfamiliar, but it is a great, new way in."

The show follows hosts who go to meet chefs and visit restaurants that offer incredible local meat dishes. Their travels take them everywhere from street market stalls to high-end restaurants. "A lot of Asian cuisine is very meat heavy, and this is all about breaking

down stereotypes," says Gorfolova.

That the presenters are millennials is important to sales pitch. "What we like about this type of Asian content is it focuses on the younger demographics, and that is something that more and more channels worldwide are trying to find," says Gorfolova.

"The hosts are all in their twenties, which immediately adds interest, as the presentation is relatable. Generally, this is targeted towards any channels that have food or travel programming, or other similar channels," she adds. "We have got several offers on the table already."

THE SHOW: *Prisoners of War India*
THE PRODUCER: Emmay Entertainment
THE BROADCASTER: Star Plus (India)
THE DISTRIBUTOR: Keshet Int'l
THE CONCEPT: An Indian remake of Israeli spy mystery drama

Keshet International's *Prisoners of War* is one of the world's most successful scripted formats. Besides the original Israeli series, the US Showtime version, *Homeland*, is now heading into its sixth season and has been renewed through to season eight.

Keshet has also sold the format into South Korea, Colombia/Hispanic US/Mexico, and Russia, and the latest version is for 21st Century-owned Star Plus in India.

"Everyone is interested in the spy-espionage drama genre," says Keshet International head of Asia, Gary Pudney. "We believe this is the biggest budget drama in the history of Indian television, and that's based on the cast and director. This is all about the quality of the script, the heritage, and the success of the show for other broadcasters."

Pudney is referring to Bollywood director Nikkhil Advani (*Kal Ho Na Ho*), a prominent figure in the Indian entertainment sector. Advani's prodco, Emmay Entertainment,



is producing the show, which has been commissioned for two seasons.

"It's very similar to the Israeli original," says Pudney. "[Original series creator] Gideon Raff was in India recently and was able to follow the plot of an episode without subtitles.

Ratings had not come in at press time, but

Pudney says the show was the number one trend on Twitter in India during its Monday 10.30pm timeslot, and has garnered excellent reviews in the Indian press.

"This is a step change for Indian drama towards more western-style drama," says Pudney. "It's a game-changer for Star."



THE SHOW: *The Truth Behind the Headlines*
THE PRODUCER: Retro Report
THE BROADCASTER: NY Times (US)
THE DISTRIBUTOR: Off the Fence
THE CONCEPT: A doc series debunking famous headlines that proved to be wrong

The Truth Behind the Headlines feels like a documentary property more relevant now than ever. With political and media discourse fragmented like never before after the Brexit vote in the UK and the election of Donald Trump into the White House, there is a new desire for content that looks beyond the front page.

"This documentary reveals how when

newspapers get it wrong, it can be really important and significant," says Ellen Windemuth, CEO and founder of Amsterdam-based factual distributor Off the Fence. "This debunks those key headlines from the past."

The series, which runs to 35 episodes that work as commercial half-hours, features stories such as the Challenger shuttle disaster of 1986, the 2000 Florida presidential election count and the Exxon Valdez oil spill. Each incident has led to conspiracy theories and headlines that have proven problematic, to say the least. "Headlines have shaped the world, but many of them are completely wrong," says Windemuth.

Retro Report, a non-profit news organisation that makes and distributes documentaries to act as a counterweight to the mainstream 24-7 news cycle, first created the docs for The New York Times as online videos.

"The likes of A+E would be a fantastic partner for it, but a big selection of channels will be interested in this," says Windemuth.



THE SHOW: *Disturbia*
THE PRODUCERS: Make Entertainment, Bedlam Productions, Big Man Films
THE DISTRIBUTOR: 108 Media
THE CONCEPT: Horror anthology series about 21st century nightmares, set in Asian cities

Anthology is the drama genre of the past few years in the US, with *The People vs OJ Simpson: American Crime Story*, *True Detective* and *American Horror Story* all hits, and now the trend has spread to Asia.

THE SHOW: *WooRooRoo*
THE PRODUCER: Studio Keystone
THE DISTRIBUTOR: Bomanbrigde Media
THE CONCEPT: Animated kids series based on the educational theories of American science populariser Carl Sagan

Asian territories have become increasingly interested in animation created and produced in the continent, eschewing older tastes for more western-style toons. Bringing ideas from both Asia and the US is the basis of *WooRooRoo*.

The South Korea-produced toon is "absolutely and quintessentially Asian in its possible positioning, but is very international in its appeal", says Sonia Fleck, CEO of Bomanbridge Media, which has distribution rights in Asia.

"We have seen several animation channels in Asia launch this year that really want to acquire Asian programming," she adds. "They want shows with different visual aesthetics to western animation. Interestingly, there is appeal for

Disturbia is billed as a 6x60mins horror that "reboots *The Twilight Zone* and *Hammer House of Horror* for the 21st century".

"The elements are quite attractive, there has been lots of anthology out of North America, and lots of noir out of Scandinavia, but not anthology from Asia," says Abhi Rastogi, CEO of Toronto-based distributor 108 Media, which took rights to the project at an early stage.

Disturbia comes from writer and producer Adam Phillips, and tells individual stories of the paranoia of modern life in suburban locales around Southeast Asia. Episodes will focus on horrific stories that have "a new level of frightening relevance", be that financial panic, middle-class anxiety or the wealth gap. "You are using these cities as a window to the world," says Rastogi. "This is all about the pressures and lives of these people."

Underbelly director Tony Tilse is attached to the project, which has *The King's Speech* prodco Bedlam Productions and Big Man Films in the UK, plus Singapore's Make Entertainment attached. "We are looking to get more involved and are talking to prospective partners," says Rastogi. "It is currently six hours, but we are seeing if prospective partners would want more."



these shows in the West, and there will be more and more content from this part of the world."

What makes this title particularly noteworthy is that it is based on a theory that prominent 20th Century American astrophysicist Carl Sagan formed to help children with their emotional intelligence and development.

Each five minute, non-verbal episode features a different arrangement of eight core characters, who represent different parts of the brain and demonstrate to children how to care for each other.

"Sagan believed we really do learn in different ways, and this approach helps kids identify with at least one of the characters," says Fleck.

THE SHOW: *My Wife Rules*
THE PRODUCERS: Erdi Yapim, Hervé Hubert
THE DISTRIBUTOR: Global Agency
THE CONCEPT: Comedy cooking format in which couples attempt to work together to create a better dish than a professional chef

Global Agency's hybrid format *My Wife Rules* mixes couples relationship format beats and cooking competition to create an access prime offer that company founder and CEO Izzet Pinto says could be one of the Turkey-based distributor's "best-selling formats".

Following its launch at MIPCOM last month, nine deals are in place, including two with broadcasters. Agreements in the US, Germany and Spain are all set to close, says Pinto.

The programme, which can be stripped across the week, sees three couples face off in a cooking contest in which only the wife knows the recipe. She guides the husband through the cooking instructions via an earpiece, and then tastes the dish, and another created by a celebrity chef, to decide which is best.

"Often the husband's food is awful, which creates the humour," says Pinto. "That's why this is a comedy format rather than a cooking talent format."

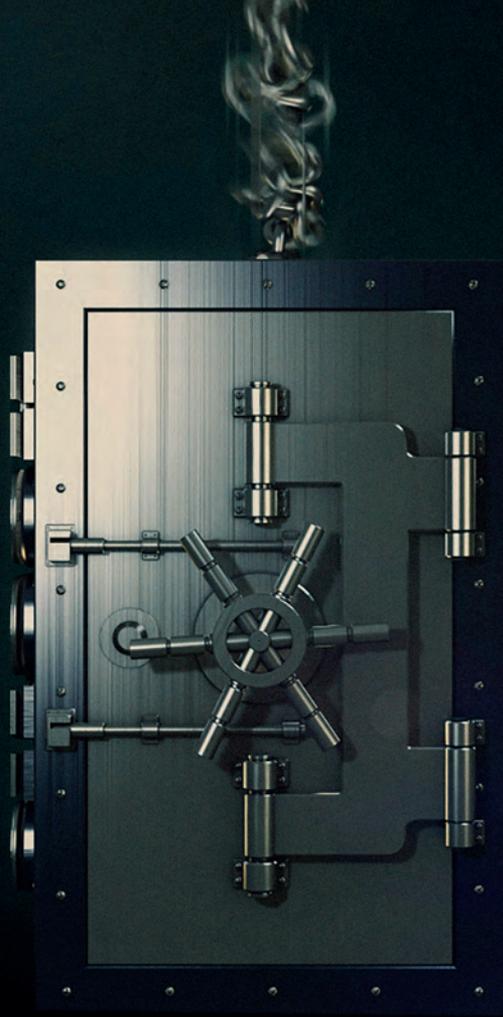
Pinto says the show works well in a variety of guises, especially for mid- to late-afternoon slots, as "many channels need formats for the whole week – this is perfect for that", adding: "I want to reach 40 territories by the end of 2017."

My Wife Rules was one of the formats singled out at The Wit's influential Fresh TV Formats report from MIPCOM, which will help with Global Agency sales pitch – the session is always one of the busiest during the Cannes confab and generates plenty of discussion. **TBI**





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LAST WORD

AMANDA GROOM



Asian docs evolution underlines region's potential

Amanda Groom, MD of The Bridge, which facilitates deals between Asian- and English-language partners, reports from Asian Side of the Doc, and says the continent is now a global hub of creativity

A sea change in Asian TV production occurred between October 31 and November 4 in Bangkok, at the annual Asian Side of the Doc (ASD).

Earlier in September, the CEO and founder of ASD Yves Jeanneau, Edmee Eleazar of France's Eleazar Productions, and I had conducted a series of training and mentoring sessions with upcoming Asian film and documentary producers who had come together in Bangkok.

I was really impressed by the rich originality and the strength of the Asian voices that we helped shape. The irony was not lost on me: Asia was revealing itself as an extraordinarily rich source of fascinating stories, combined with compelling creative storytelling styles only days after MIPCOM, where US studio executives had been openly discussing their concerns about Hollywood becoming culturally and creatively bankrupt.

What was most exciting in Asia was that these stories combined to form a compelling new voice with the kind of exclusive access – personal, cultural and physical – that few Western producers would be able to gain.

We were taken inside the detention centres of Myanmar, heard intimate family experiences from within the communist insurgency

of the Philippines in the 1950s, and were treated to intimate studies of the shrinking world of traditional peoples throughout Asia and the seemingly unstoppable march of industrialisation across the region.

When we came together again for the main event, ASD, this new found confidence in storytelling was obvious in all the pitches, as was the growing number of innovative incubation support and mentoring initiatives that are supporting the storytellers, filmmakers and producers.

One incubation model is called TAP, or The Asian Pitch. It sees four leading Asian broadcasters agree to share a commission, and air the work of new Asian filmmakers.

Japan's NHK, South Korea's KBS, Taiwan's PTS and Singapore's Mediacorp have collectively agreed to showcase the selected projects for broadcast as part of TAP. Each national broadcaster will nurture and mentor the project's development for their air, and all will broadcast the end result, giving producers and storytellers pan-Asian reach.

Another visionary initiative that is strengthening pan-Asian storytelling voices comes out of Indonesia, and is headed by Amelia Hapsari. Dare to Dream currently has nine projects from seven Asian filmmakers in production. This project will mentor and guide

these projects through development, creating finished stories for the global marketplace. The films will take us inside Muslim schools, follow young activists in underground movements, question traditions, and highlight those who are taking a different path across Asia.

Of course, mentoring, and commitment to broadcast alone are not enough.

Step in new and fast-emerging Asian funding models for content, such as that of Aurora Media Holdings in Singapore, led by Justin Deimen. AMH, a media asset vehicle, is working on newly-formed investment funds for Southeast Asian content, programming incubation and investment plans, in partnership with content creators, including Endemol Shine Asia.

Combine the above with growing ASEAN government commitments to production, and the end result is a pool of viable, rich new content, and multiple opportunities for both local and global producers.

South Korea has long adopted a soft-power cultural policy of investing in creative content, and now this model is being copied across the region. There is a new commitment to funding of content creation in Thailand through its creative agencies, echoing the South Korean policies that have been proven so successful globally.

I remember proposing to UK independent production companies and broadcasters over a decade ago that South Korea was a viable content partner in terms of both investment and talent. Then it was a hard sell, and few companies took the suggestion seriously. Now they do, and with Thailand and other ASEAN nations also following the same content funding initiative this offers serious opportunity for UK and global production companies and broadcasters. **TBI**

Asia was revealing itself as an extraordinarily rich source of fascinating stories only days after MIPCOM, where American studio executives had been openly discussing their concerns about Hollywood becoming culturally and creatively bankrupt

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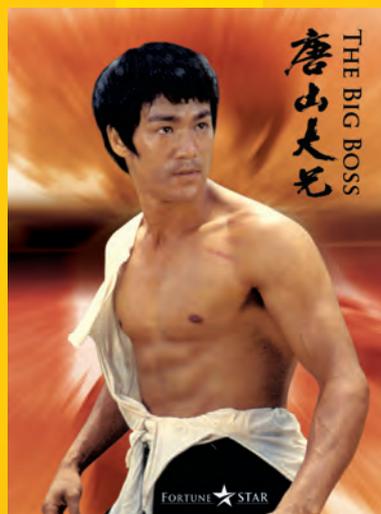
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