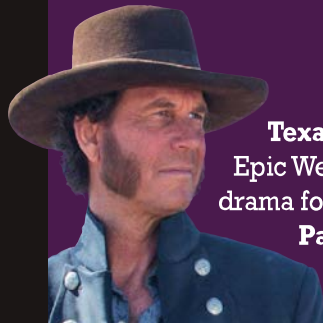


# TBI



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April/May 2015 MIPTV Issue



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VICTORIA JUSTICE

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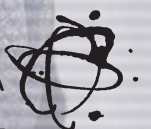
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# EDITOR'S NOTE



STEWART CLARKE

**A**s the industry heads to Cannes, it is clear that among viewers and execs alike, a lot of the TV chat is now about drama.

One side-effect of the rise and rise of drama is that there is less room in schedules for other programmes. Natural history and innovative new formats are struggling to find space in programming grids as scripted shows take centre stage.

In our debut issue of TBI Scripted, we immerse ourselves in TV drama, with in-depth profiles, interviews and features, including a look at Spanish primetime, France's second new wave and Colin Callender on his influences. We also have *Shameless* creator Paul Abbott writing about his new cop drama.

The factual community is, meanwhile, pulling out the stops to reinvent natural history. We canvass opinion, and check in with some of the biggest names in natural history to find out how the classic genre is being re-engineered. Discovery's Phil Craig tells us about a new concept, 'new chip', and his plans for programming at the factual giant, having joined in March.

We also speak to execs in the formats business about innovation, and trying to create a golden age of entertainment, amid criticism that

a lot of formats coming to market are derivative.

Programming grids and linear channels are, in some respects, old news anyway, in a world where streaming is taking ever greater prominence. We take a look at how OTT operators are organising their content and ask whether curation has replaced scheduling as the new dark art.

In TBI Kids, we look at preschool, the best shows for MIPTV, and assess what YouTube's kids app means for content companies. Mark Dillon also speaks to producers, channel operators and distributors in Canada, one of the key international kids TV markets.

Elsewhere, Viacom's international boss Bob Bakish tells us about the Channel 5 acquisition, and its new UK channel, Spike.

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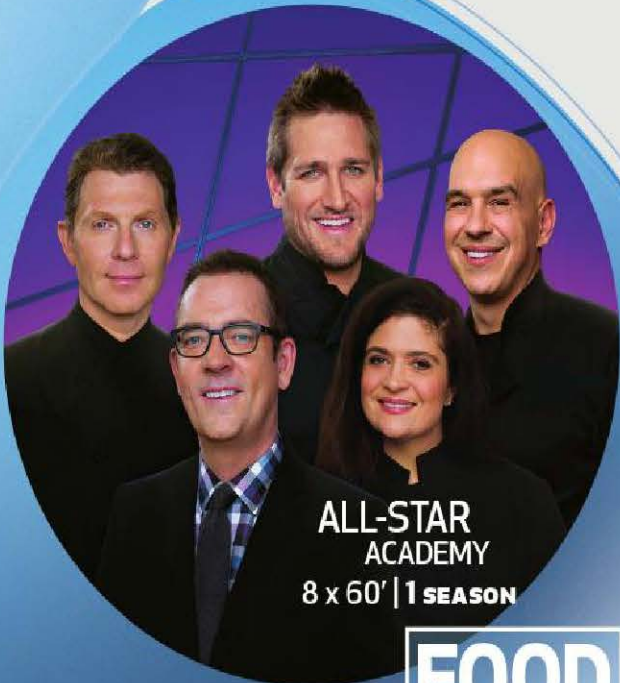




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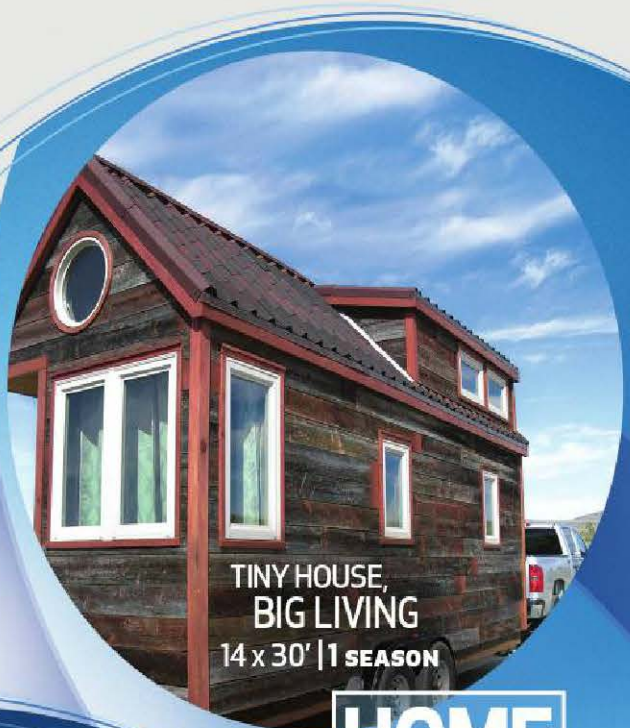
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# DIARY

28 – 30 April

**TV Connect**

London, UK

[www.tvconnectevent.com](http://www.tvconnectevent.com)

7 – 9 May

**Busan Content Market**

Busan, Korea

[www.ibcm.tv/eng](http://www.ibcm.tv/eng)

12 – 15 May

**LA Screenings**

Los Angeles, US

[www.lascreenings.org](http://www.lascreenings.org)

7 – 10 June

**BANFF TV Festival**

Banff, Canada

[www.bwtfvf.com](http://www.bwtfvf.com)

8 – 12 June

**Shanghai TV Festival**

Shanghai, China

[www.stvf.com](http://www.stvf.com)

9 – 11 June

**Licensing International Expo**

Las Vegas, US

[www.licensingexpo.com](http://www.licensingexpo.com)

13 – 18 June

**Monte Carlo TV Festival**

Monte Carlo, Monaco

[www.tvfestival.com](http://www.tvfestival.com)

15 – 20 June

**MIFA**

Anncy, France

[www.annecy.org](http://www.annecy.org)

23 – 24 June

**Smart Home World**

London, UK

[www.smarthomeworld2015.com](http://www.smarthomeworld2015.com)

22 – 25 June

**NATPE Europe**

Prague, Czech Republic

[www.natpe.com/europe](http://www.natpe.com/europe)

22 – 25 June

**Sunnyside of the Doc**

La Rochelle, France

[www.sunnysideofthedoc.com](http://www.sunnysideofthedoc.com)

24 – 26 June

**Digital TV CEE**

Budapest, Hungary

[www.digitaltvcee.com](http://www.digitaltvcee.com)

1 – 3 July

**Children's Media Conference**

Sheffield, UK

[www.thechildrensmediaconference.com](http://www.thechildrensmediaconference.com)

26 – 28 August

**Media Guardian Edinburgh International TV Festival**

Edinburgh, Scotland

[www.mgeitf.co.uk](http://www.mgeitf.co.uk)

6 – 10 September

**Le Rendez-Vous**

Biarritz, France

[www.tvfrance-intl.com](http://www.tvfrance-intl.com)

15 – 18 September

**Cartoon Forum**

Toulouse, France

[www.cartoon-media.eu](http://www.cartoon-media.eu)

3 – 4 October

**MIP Junior**

Cannes, France

[www.mipjunior.com](http://www.mipjunior.com)

5 – 8 October

**MIPCOM**

Cannes, France

[www.mipcom.com](http://www.mipcom.com)

13 – 15 October

**Brand Licensing Europe**

London, UK

[www.brandlicensing.eu](http://www.brandlicensing.eu)

4 – 6 November

**DISCOP Africa**

Johannesburgh, South Africa

[www.discop.com](http://www.discop.com)

4 – 11 November

**AFM**

Santa Monica, US

[www.americanfilmmarket.com](http://www.americanfilmmarket.com)

16 – 19 November

**OTT TV World Summit**

London, UK

[www.ottworldsummit.com](http://www.ottworldsummit.com)

21 – 25 November

**2015 International Emmy® World Television Festival**

New York, USA

[www.iemmys.tv/festival.aspx](http://www.iemmys.tv/festival.aspx)

2 – 4 December

**Cartoon Digital**

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Though recent data shows Netflix could be losing market share to Amazon Prime Instant Video in the US, the streaming service has massively bolstered its offer in 2015, acquiring and commissioning series and movies while continuing its rapid international roll-out

## Deal monitor: Netflix

Research from analyst IHS shows *Marco Polo* platform Netflix now spends more on content than the BBC, HBO and Discovery. Five years ago, such a statistic would have been unthinkable.

As well as going after the market share of rival content players, the SVOD giant made history earlier this year by becoming the first service of its kind in Cuba – a symbolic gesture that said much about the thawing political ties between the US and its Caribbean neighbour, and about Netflix's globally-minded plans.

Netflix then went live in Australia last month, and has confirmed a debut in Japan later this year. Spanish and Italian launches are expected to come in Q3 or Q4 as the third phase of its European roll-out comes to pass.

Before the Aussie launch, Netflix acquired a package of Australian factual, stand-up and kids series, including *Mythbusters*, from Beyond Distribution. Deals with other Australian distributors were also closed as Netflix toiled up against growing local competition.

Netflix has also teamed with the BBC and

Seven Network for kids original *Botterbnikes & Gumbles*, a new animated series based on the S.A. Wakefield children's books. The series will be produced by UK prodco Cheeky Little Media and Australia's Mighty Nice.

The service has also got in on the reboots trend by bagging exclusive rights to a pair of classic kids TV series reworked for the modern era. Deals with FremantleMedia Kids & Family Entertainment and DHX Media hand the streamer US rights to *Danger Mouse* and *Inspector Gadget*, respectively.

Meanwhile, Netflix has ruffled the feathers of cinema chains and the wider movie business by getting into original feature films. It has acquired exclusive rights to *Jadotville*, a war film set during an African siege in 1961 and starring *The Fall* and *Fifty Shades of Grey* star Jamie Dornan, for around US\$17 million. The deal is an example of the streaming service's attempt to disrupt what it says is an "antiquated" feature film windowing structure.

It also paid big bucks to debut *Beasts of No Nation*, which stars *Luther's* Idris Elba as a war lord and is about a West African child soldier. The fact the film debuts in select theatres at the same time as Netflix means it should still be able to qualify for 2016 Oscar nominations, with buzz around *Beasts* already significant.

The platform has bagged exclusive global rights to *Pee-wee Herman's Big Holiday*, an upcoming comedy film from director Judd Apatow, and has four-picture agreements with Adam Sandler and the Duplass Brothers.

Back on the scripted series side, upcoming drama originals include *The Get Down*, an original music-driven drama set in 1970s New York that will be *The Great Gatsby* director Baz Luhrmann's first foray into TV.

From *Arrested Development* star Will Arnett comes comedy *Flaked*, which follows a self-appointed 'guru' in an insular Californian community whose carefully crafted image and sobriety begins to unravel after he falls for the object of his best friend's desires. Electus and Pricipato-Young coproduce.



There is also *Club de Cuevos*, a Spanish-language comedy about a family feud, set against the backdrop of a football club, from Mexican prodco Alazraki Entertainment. *Wet Hot American Summer*, meanwhile, is based on the 2001 comedy feature film of the same name and features several of the original cast.

Drama series acquisitions include exclusive global rights to *The Returned*, the US remake of French drama *Les Revenants*, from FremantleMedia International. The deal marks the first time the US-listed streaming service has global premiere rights to an acquired drama.

On the factual front, there's a new pact with Leonardo DiCaprio to make original environmental- and conservation-themed docs. The Hollywood star's prodco, Appian Way, will produce the upcoming series under the terms of a first-look deal. DiCaprio has previously worked with Netflix on *Virunga*, the Academy Award-nominated feature doc about park rangers in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Doc acquisitions include *Hot Girls Wanted*, about professional 'amateur' pornography. It comes from Jill Bauer and Ronna Gradus and will premiere in all Netflix territories this year. Competition for eyeballs across platforms is hotter than ever, but Netflix continues to pump out cash for content as it fights to retain a dominant spot in the streaming space and make in-roads elsewhere. **TBI**





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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

A+E Networks has poached BBC Worldwide's AMANDA HILL to become its chief creative officer, international. She will be responsible for overseeing A+E's programming, marketing and communications teams across its global portfolio, which includes the A+E channel, History and FYI. Included in this is responsibility for all content development



RTL Group's long-serving Hungarian chief executive Dirk Gerkens is leaving his post, with Andreas Rudas appointed interim CEO. Hungarian reports claim his exit is linked to talks between the European channels group and Hungary's government, which have been at loggerheads over a controversial advertising tax

CYMA ZARGHAMI has been named president of Viacom Kids and Family Group and Doug Herzog topper at Viacom Music and Entertainment Group after Viacom split its channels operations in two. Previous boss Van Toffler is among many execs leaving as part of wide-scale restructuring that has affected MTV, Nick and TV Land



FremantleMedia North America has named Ron Garfield as general manager and executive VP of its upcoming multicast game show network Buzzr. Garfield has held senior channels roles at Sony Pictures Television, Ovation, Hallmark Channel and Fox

Colin Callender's drama producer Playground Entertainment has hired Channel 4 exec TOM LEGGETT as director of development. Leggett was a senior development editor at the UK broadcaster's digital channel Film4



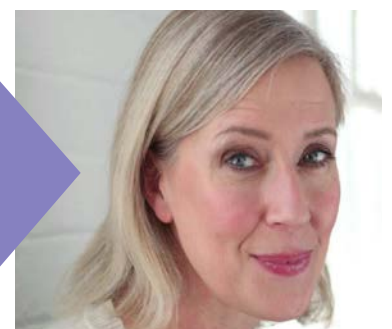
Elaine Frontain Bryant and Paul Cabana have been promoted to heads of programming for A+E and History, respectively. This comes as new A+E and Lifetime executive VP and general manager Rob Sharenow beds into his new role after replacing David McKillop, who departed in February

Ireland's TV3 has named LYNDA MCQUAID as its director of content to replace the Fox International Channels-bound Jeff Ford. McQuaid will take up her post in April, when former Channel 5 chief Ford moves back to London to become general manager of FIC UK



Henrik Ravn has returned to broadcaster ProSiebenSat.1. He had run P7S1's SBS Broadcasting before it was sold to Discovery Communications, but left after Dee Forbes took on his duties when she became Discovery Networks' northern Europe boss. Ravn has been named COO and chief commercial officer of broadcast operations at P7S1

LIZ WARNER is leaving Discovery Communications-owned UK producer Betty 14 years after she founded the business. She exits the *Bear Grylls: Mission Survive* prodco this month and her CEO position will not be replaced, with senior management reporting into creative director Neil Smith





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# Viacom sparks Spike into life

*Frankenfood*

Spike is an established channel in the US, but until this April wasn't known internationally. Bob Bakish tells Stewart Clarke how it will become Viacom's fifth global brand and how it fits into its wider global plans. Michael Armstrong, the executive overseeing the international Spike, drills down on the launch

**W**hen Viacom paid US\$740 million for UK free-to-air broadcaster Channel 5 last September, the US media giant spoke about how its investment in British content would put it in the top ranks of UK free TV and boost all of its international channels. What it didn't say at the time was that it would facilitate the launch of one of its big US

5, but that is not a signal we are going to fundamentally change the strategy. It was a unique opportunity to grow our position in the UK.

"The logic was a couple-fold. It gave us a bigger presence in the most important market outside the US. We had Viva, but to have a PSB on the first page of the EPG is a whole different opportunity. It also enhanced our ability to create our own original programming."



**"We looked at our US shows and the Channel 5 library and realised we had the makings of a fantastic UK Spike channel"**  
**Bob Bakish**

channel brands in the UK – but that is what has happened with Spike, which launches April 15.

"When we looked at the Channel 5 library it occurred to us that, with our US programming and Channel 5 content, we had the makings of a fantastic UK Spike channel fairly quickly," says Viacom International Media Networks CEO and president Bob Bakish.

In the UK, Spike will replace DTT music channel Viva on Freeview, and be carried on another free-to-air platform, Freesat. Elsewhere internationally, it will launch as an incremental channel in the VIMN portfolio or, in the same way as with Viva, replace one already in situ.

Bakish says: "In the UK it will be a mix of great originals [from the US] and great off-net product, principally from Channel 5 in the UK.

"We'll supplement that with local commissions and some of that production will be done in-house by 5Production, which gives us high-quality content at an attractive price. Internationally, we've done a lot of work around formats and will continue that with Spike."

The launch slate includes *Tattoo Disasters UK*, with the skin-art-gone-wrong show being made by 5Production.

Addressing a broader issue, the Viacom International chief says that the industry should not take its Channel 5 deal as a sign the company is about to embark on a Discovery Communications-style buying spree.

"We are fundamentally an organic growth company," Bakish says. "We did something different with Channel

A strategic boost from the deal was an increased ability to create and fund content across both free and pay TV, with Channel 5 and MTV UK reality series co-commission *10,000 BC*, and Channel 5 kids strand *Milkshake* co-funding *Nella the Knight* with Nickelodeon, the most notable examples thus far.



Bellator MMA will be on Spike UK

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accelerate  
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Banijay Group brought on former Endemol North America boss David Goldberg last year and tasked him with setting up an LA-based production studio. He tells TBI about his US strategy

# Banijay ready for Stateside battle

**A**s president of Endemol North America, David Goldberg has previously worked for now-Banijay Group CEO Marco Bassetti. As Banijay's US boss and group president, Goldberg's first hire saw another Endemol alumni, Caroline Baumgard, join the company as CCO, and the task ahead at Banijay is, Goldberg says, not dissimilar to the one he faced at the start of his 13-year tenure at Endemol North America.

What is different is the wider landscape that has emerged since he got his previous employer up and running Stateside.

"It is more of a challenge because there is a completely different climate in TV now," he says. "Europe and the rest of the world were ahead of the US [in unscripted] back then. There was a deep library of content that hadn't been seen in the US, and then likes of *Millionaire* and *Big Brother* came in.

"It was the same with creating [unscripted] in the US. There was a healthy appetite for this type of programming. Now after 15 or so years, it is harder to find things that are new."

Banijay certainly has international heft, with 13 prodcos across numerous international territories and a distribution arm, but it does not have the scale of the biggest of the consolidated TV groups. However, hit-making is about more than just size, the Banijay US chief says.

"There are companies with deep benches and deep libraries, and by their sheer numbers they have an advantage," Goldberg says. "But what is great is that no-one knows where the next mega-hit is coming from and there is no exclusivity on that."

New unit Banijay Studios North America sits alongside Banijay's other US production interest, unscripted producer Bunim/Murray, which counts *Project Runway* and *Keeping Up with the Kardashians* among its credits. BSNA's aim is to create English-language fare for the Stateside market, predominantly in the unscripted space.

"Banijay is a well-capitalised, creative company that has the potential to become one of the most important players in the largest



television market in the world," Goldberg said when he was hired a year ago. One sign of that capital on hand is the desire to play in the M&A space, as evidenced by the acquisition, in May, of a controlling stake in Stephen David Entertainment. The US prodco specialises in scripted docs (see TBI Scripted) and counts History channel series *The World Wars* and *Sons of Liberty* (pictured) among its credits.

However, Banijay won't follow the Endemol M&A model. It will not be "buying EBITDA"; acquiring to simply scale up the overall business. And will not buy a lot of US prodcos that compete with one another.

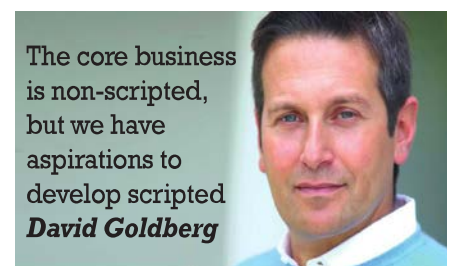
What it will do is make targeted acquisitions that will allow it to start meaningful programming discussions with buyers.

"We want to be focused and acquire in a way that allows us to diversify," Goldberg says. "Stephen David Entertainment is a unique, profitable business. Its [scripted documentary] programming is attractive to broadcasters, as it looks better than reality, but comes in at a price point below scripted.

"Our core business will be in non-scripted, but we do have aspirations to develop a scripted entity and that was part of the thinking behind that acquisition.

"The things we are looking at need growth potential. It could be scripted or it could be digital; we're focused on growing that [digital] part of the business, and are assessing how to do that."

While retaining rights from US cable channel commissions is more challenging than in the past, more cable nets than ever before are commissioning scripted and unscripted. Any



**The core business is non-scripted, but we have aspirations to develop scripted**  
**David Goldberg**

US commission will be distributed through Banijay International.

Goldberg's remit is, however, wider than just the US. Another goal is to hire a UK-based studio exec that will work out of London.

In the attempt to take advantage of the US cable commissioning gold rush, the test will be whether Goldberg's division can get away returning series, retain the rights to its original programming, and create international hits. **TBI**



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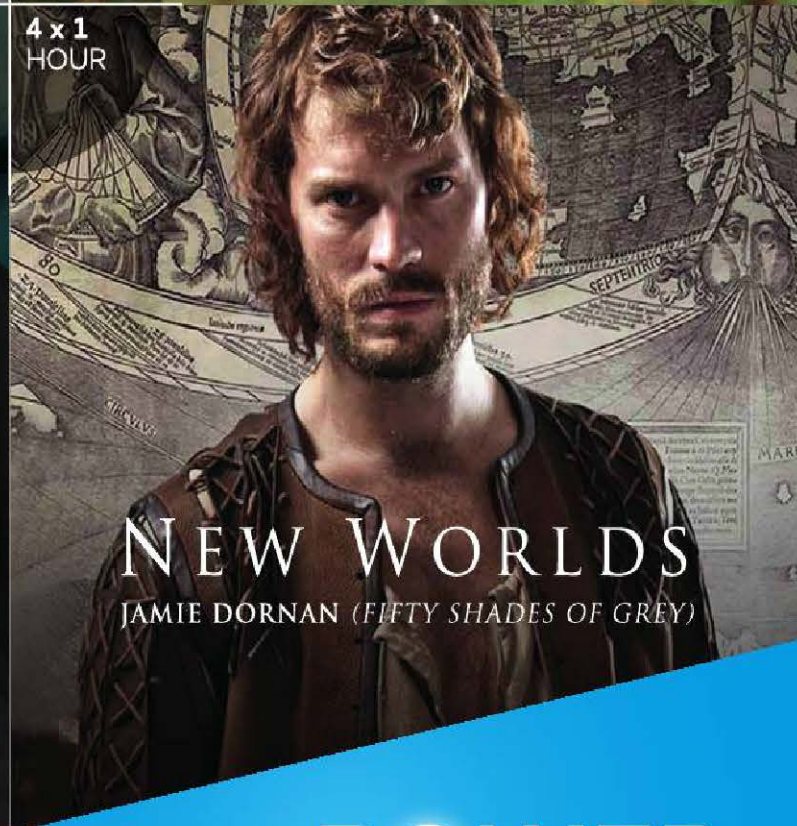


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# The world in ratings: lessons from 2014

Eurodata analyst Aurelie Sykes-Darmon highlights the latest industry-defining trends in the TV world

In 2014, the global TV audience's preferences fluctuated between an enduring fondness for fiction, and for entertainment formats, which made a comeback, the latest top 10 programme rankings reveal. Fiction represented 40% of the programmes in the top rankings, and the gap narrowed year-on-year between drama and entertainment.

Entertainment was largely boosted by reality series and major event shows, while fiction, a category that includes movies, telenovelas and comedies, was kept at the top by drama series. On the factual front, consumption has remained stabled over the past three years, with shows in the category accounting for 21% of the top ten programme rankings in the 67 countries surveyed – largely thanks to the popularity, in troubled geopolitical times, of economic and political news.

Drama series are gaining ground and now represent 63% of the most-watched programmes in the wider fiction category, an increase on 2013. Viewers in Spain and Italy proved avid fans of local series with *El Principe* and *Don Matteo* ranked as the top dramas in those territories respectively. Turkish series once again proved to be successful internationally in 2014, and more specifically in eastern Europe – notably, in Macedonia where they represented 70% of 2014's top 10 performances.

Like every year, major television events made the news throughout the

world. The *CCTV Spring Festival Gala* retained its position as the world's most watched programme with an overall of 166 million viewers split between CCTV General Channel and CCTV3, according to CSM Media Research, while the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympic Games opening ceremony gathered over 33 million people in the US, according to Nielsen Media Research.

On the reality front, international brands have confirmed their success. *The Voice*, recorded 14 occurrences in world top 10 rankings. More recently *The Voice Kids* performed particularly well, especially in the Philippines, where it ranked as the most-watched programme of the year with a 57% market share, according to Nielsen.

New programmes also stimulated audiences worldwide, with 21% of the top shows surveyed in the international rankings launched in 2014. A promising future lies ahead for fiction as it makes up 72% of these new hits, leaving a smaller share for entertainment formats. Drama series again represent the winning bet, and accounted for 80% of fiction launches, while viewers also confirmed their preference for local production, which made up 82% of the new drama series hits, versus imported programmes at 18%.

Reality formats are not losing ground and constituted 64% of the new hits in the entertainment category, lifted by popular international formats such as *Your Face Sounds Familiar* (both the original and kids versions). **TBI**



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**DEAD AGAIN - (A&E) New!**  
**Running time:** 9 x 60' **Genre:** Reality  
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Launching in late 2013, Canadian upstart channel Gusto has established itself domestically and at MIPTV will bring its original series to market. Founder Chris Knight tells TBI about being an indie lifestyle broadcaster, producer, and now, distributor

# Gusto adds spice to foodie market

“There is no owners manual that comes with a broadcast license,” says Knight Enterprises’ Chris Knight about his fledgling food channel Gusto. Still less than 18 months old, it has cornered the classic food TV market and having moved into originals, is at MIPTV with two series, *A is for Apple* (below) and *One World Kitchen*.

A producer of many years, the Gusto founder says that the move into channels was borne out of changes in the local media landscape. “There was a perfect storm,” he says. “The economy was grinding to a halt and there was a frenzy of media consolidation – I was running out of people to make shows for. Broadcasters wanted more and more rights and were paying less and less cash.”

Knight decided, against a raft of advice, to move into the specialty channels arena. That meant taking on Food Network, which having shifted into a more lifestyle and entertainment space and left room for a pure foodie TV play. “There was so much content for us to acquire, as there were so few outlets for quality food programming,” Knight says. At launch, Gusto went out with acquired series including chef-based offerings from Nigel Slater,



Rachel Allen and Rick Stein. About 85% of Gusto’s schedule is currently first-run in Canada.

“The competition has wholesale abandoned the type of programming that made them popular in the first place; they have migrated to ‘food entertainment’, and they are wonderfully successful at it. We decided to go with what made food TV popular in the first place. When people go home there are multiple choices for drama, comedy or sport, but in Canada we are the only channel for food.”

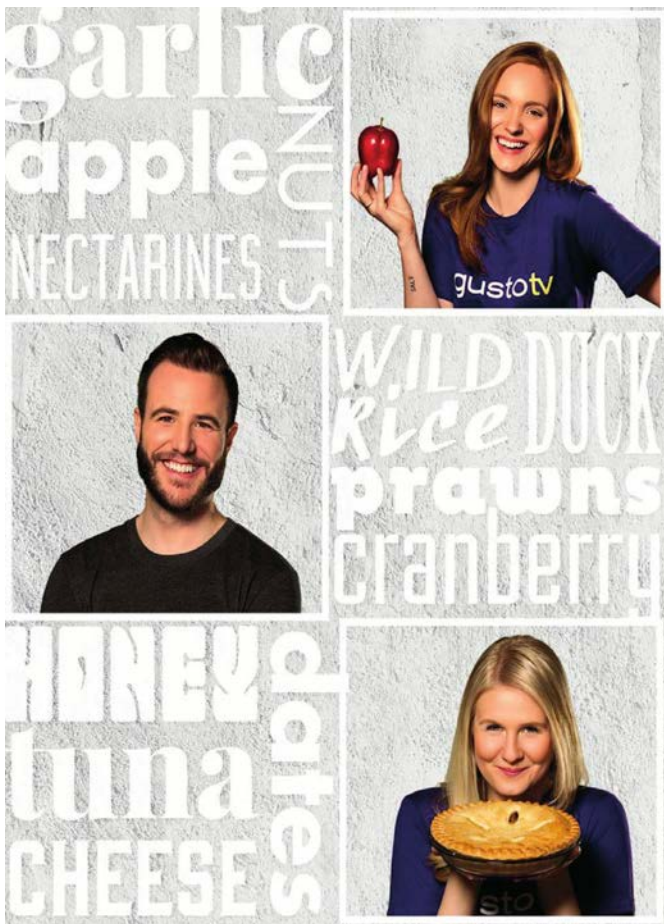
The pair of original programmes launching internationally in Cannes fit the classic mould, albeit with the modern twists of being shot in 4K and in unconventional cooking spaces. In *One World Kitchen*, five cooks explore five global cuisines: Argentine, Japanese, Indiana, Italian and Thai. There will be a 130-part package of webisodes for buyers as well as 150 rights-cleared recipes. Knight says the additional content is important because “while broadcasters talk about digital and Netflix, when you look at what’s for sale, it is often not more than the linear rights.”

The other show, *A is for Apple*, is a “foodie homage to *Sesame Street*”. The lighthearted half-hour show takes a letter of the alphabet letter and explores ingredients that start with it. Five more originals will come before spring 2016, and with the benefits of being a Canadian channel operator, copros are in the offing.

In terms of domestic distribution, Gusto is on Bell, Eastlink, Telus and MTS’ pay TV platforms. Its case for getting carriage on Shaw, one of the big players that does not carry it, is not helped by the fact the media giant co-owns Food Network (with Scripps). However, undeterred by the distribution challenge, Knight says he will launch two more lifestyle channels in Canada in the next three years. Any international roll outs will wait until there is a larger catalogue of original programming.

Meanwhile, with its 18-49 demo and business model that captures linear and digital ad dollars as well as exploiting off-screen publishing and events rights, suitors are already understood to have approached Gusto.

“There is an inevitability that a sales event will be triggered,” Knight says. “My personal preference is for an IPO, which would allow us to really push into the international market. But for the time being I’m having too much fun figuring out the model and how it all works.” **TBI**



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# Craving attention

Mike Cosentino, content boss at Canadian on-demand service CraveTV, tells TBI about the platform's early successes and programming

**W**hen CraveTV launched in Canada last December, it entered a fiercely competitive Canadian SVOD scene, with Netflix well-established and two of the country's big cablers, Shaw and Rogers, teaming to launch their own service, Shomi. However, CraveTV has itself got a hugely-resourced backer in the shape of Bell Media, the telco that owns free-to-air channel CTV and a raft of specialty nets including Bravo and Space.

That backing gave CraveTV, at launch, the HBO catalogue, and it has proceeded to supplement that with a raft of big-ticket acquisitions.

SVOD deals with Disney, Fox and Sony Pictures Television, Warner Bros. and BBC Worldwide have been inked, and CraveTV has snagged exclusive *Seinfeld* rights and Amazon fare. It also picked up a raft of *Monty Python* content, numerous music docs and concerts, and some factual shows. The line-up is split across 22 content categories.

Mike Cosentino, senior VP of programming at Bell Media talks to TBI.



**TBI: You are still only a few months in, but what can you share in terms of what is really working with your subs?**

**MC:** Big programme franchises are perfect for CraveTV; serialised drama is the clear favourite, analytics-wise. One of the surprises and one of the categories that punches above its weight has been music. We have music docs, concerts and collections and they're doing really well. The *Python* content is also getting attention, and Tom Hanks doc *The Sixties* is also doing very well.

**TBI: Earlier this year you did a deal with CBS that allowed you to create a Showtime block, how significant was that?**

**MC:** The Showtime deal was a game changer. We announced on the Sunday during the Oscars, the biggest entertainment show there is, that there would be a Showtime collection on CraveTV on the Monday, with hundreds of hours of Showtime's best series including *Ray Donovan* and *Nurse Jackie* among others. It sits on CraveTV with Showtime branding, next to HBO.

**TBI: So it is clearly branded within CraveTV?**

**MC:** Yes. We have three brands, HBO, Showtime and Discovery, which also includes Animal Planet. I think there is a real opportunity for us to have these brand collections.

**TBI: You seem to be working closely with the Bell broadcast and cable channels, either providing a preview, or setting up the launch of new seasons of a show on a linear service by adding earlier seasons on SVOD.**

**MC:** We offer a full menu through [the combined offering of] CraveTV and the linear channels, and that is an opportunity that is unique to us. If

you haven't seen [Fox-distributed horror series] *Salem* and you find, and love, season one, you can then have a way to watch season two on Space. There is a first look for *Saving Hope* on CraveTV before the TV premiere. It's really all about a windowing strategy and that's a conversation we have internally; with original production we'll ask, 'should it window first on CraveTV or one of the network or cable channels?'

**TBI: You have struck a lot of content deals for CraveTV. Does that mean you are pretty full inventory-wise for the time being?**

**MC:** At launch we had 6,500 hours and now that is up to 8,500 and will soon reach 10,000. We have enough content to keep launching original programming until mid-2016. I have the greenlight from Bell Media to acquire more and we look at [acquiring] programming all year round. Now I can be a sniper, and be very judicious.

**TBI: It's a TV service, you don't have features and you also do not have kids content unlike other big SVOD services. Will that change over time?**

**MC:** The focus was to launch with TV content, but we're keeping our eyes open and looking at other possibilities. Kids and movies aren't a focus today, but we could look at them if we thought it made sense.

**TBI: Which major TV markets will you and the team attend?**

**MC:** We will be at MIPCOM, but not MIPTV. **TBI**

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Travel shows, with their beautiful backdrops and larger-than-life locals, may seem like a no-brainer for broadcasters, but they increasingly need a twist if they are to attract the attention of programme buyers, reports Andy Fry



# Have content, will travel

“As with any other genre, travel shows need strong stories and characters if they are going to appeal to buyers,” says Nicky Davies-Williams, CEO of DCD Rights. “If you don’t have celebrities, unique access or some kind of added editorial elements, your show won’t engage viewers and appeal to buyers, especially if you are expecting it to play in primetime.”

For the DCD distribution boss, this explains

the rise of the travel-hybrid, exemplified by DCD’s *A Cook Abroad*, which aired on BBC Two in the UK. “This is a show where six famous cooks take us on a culinary tour of the world’s most inspiring food cultures. They travel to different countries to track down the origins of their favourite dishes. In doing so, they get under the skin of cultures.”

Another DCD show, *The Billion Pound Hotel*, gives viewers unique access to Dubai’s spectacular seven star hotel, the Burj Al Arab. “Here, the appeal is looking behind the scenes at

a place most of us will never visit,” says Davies-Williams. “Some people may be tempted to go to Dubai after seeing the show, but it also works as an aspirational armchair travel experience.”

Most execs agree with the notion that travel can’t just be the TV equivalent of your brother-in-law’s holiday slide show. “There is still some room for the classic travelogue,” says Tricon Films executive VP distribution and business development Jon Rutherford, “but the last five years has seen a definite blurring of the lines between travel and reality TV. More and more

we're seeing stories around travel lifestyle, airports, hotels, baggage and food, so it's important to reflect that in your content slate."

Tricon's current titles include *Off the Map with Shannen & Holly*, a travel reality series in which *Charmed* co-stars Shannen Doherty and Holly Marie Combs go on a girls' road trip through the southeastern US. There's also *Extreme Collectors*, in which antiques appraiser Andrew Zegers travels across North America on a televised treasure hunt to find amazing collections people have amassed.

"There are elements of the classic travel show in both, but there are so many TV and online channels giving you travel tips, that you don't need a travel show to do that anymore," Rutherford says. "You can focus on the story and characters and then use a second screen if you want to know more."

Hat Trick International's sales chief Sarah Tong says: "Travel show producers have to realise they are up against established TV brands that often carry their own travel elements. If you think about a *Top Gear* special to Patagonia or Africa or the Middle East, then that is a kind of travel show embedded inside a powerful factual entertainment franchise."

HTI's slate includes *Exploring China*, in which Ken Hom and Ching-He Huang go on a culinary journey; *Bangkok Airport*, an access-driven ob-doc that looks at travellers going in and out of the Thai airport; and *Billionaire's Paradise: Inside Necker Island*. The latter, like DCD's Dubai show, is a look behind the scenes at one of the world's most exclusive destinations. HTI also represents *Scandimania*, a another hybrid travel show in which celebrity chef Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall asks why Sweden, Norway and Denmark are seen as the happiest countries in the world. "It works well because he has such a strong fanbase worldwide; this kind of show is in demand from buyers," says Tong. "But my one warning is that you need to be careful about how you present hybrids. Some channels have quite rigid slot structures and you can find that they won't take a show because its subject-matter falls between two stools."

While celebrities are often vital to the success of a travel show, it's not enough for them to just turn up and take the air. Themes that crop up repeatedly during discussion with distributors are the need for authenticity and the sense that the celebrity is on a personal journey. For example, Michael Palin's combination of intelligence, sensitivity and subtle humour



Cineflix's *Food, Booze and Tattoos*



Tricon's *Off the Map with Shannen & Holly*

made him the David Attenborough of the genre.

FremantleMedia International director of non-scripted Angela Neillis says her company's travel slate deploys famous faces in a range of scenarios. "One show we launched at MIPCOM was *Dara and Ed's Great Big Adventure*, which sees comedians Dara O'Briain and Ed Byrne travelling along the Pan-American Highway. You get beautiful locations, history, interaction with local characters and great repartee between

two friends."

FMI's catalogue also includes various Jamie Oliver food/travel hybrids; *Railway Journeys*, fronted by former politician Michael Portillo; and *Nigel Marven's Cruise Ship Adventures*, which employs an interesting structure. In the show, animal expert/adventurer Marven voyages on a luxury cruise liner, jumping off at each port to meet the locals, and taking passengers with him: "We've always done well with shows

involving Nigel, but the twist here is that he is on a cruise ship, trying to find adventures in the limited time the ship is in port," says Neillis.

Railways and cruise ships inevitably appeal to an older demo, but a change of host and a different set of experiences can soon have your show skewing younger, says Chris Bonney, CEO Rights at Cineflix Media. "We have a title called *Food, Booze and Tattoos*, which follows a model called Brett Rogers as he travels through some of South Africa's less well-known contemporary sub-cultures. It's not a typical travel show because it focuses on really cool places to eat, micro-breweries, edgy tattoo parlours."

Like his peers, Bonney says travel shows "need to be multi-layered, so that travel is a character in the show and not the sole subject". Like Tricon and FMI, he is interested in shows where two hosts can play off against each other. "In *Road Rivals*, we have polar opposites in Russ Malkin and Charley Speed," he says. "Russ travelled the world with Ewan McGregor on the *Long Way Round* and *Long Way Down*, and is used to harsh terrains and sleeping in rough, remote locations. Charley is a *Next Top Model* judge and was VHI Vogue's Male Model of the Year. Throughout the series, they force each other to try the other's preferred style of travel, so you get a really interesting competitive dynamic to it."

Passion Distribution has had a lot of success with food/travel hybrid *Man vs Food* and *An Idiot Abroad*, a comedy travelogue in which Karl Pilkington brilliantly subverts the genre with his unique brand of wry wit.

For Passion Distribution CEO Sally Miles, one emerging trend is the way travel has embraced the formatted approach that works so well in other factual sub-genres. "We have a show in our slate called *Baggage Battles*, which follows auction specialists as they travel the world bidding on unclaimed and lost property," she says. "Aired on the Travel Channel, it's one of those great shows like *Pawn Stars* and *Storage Wars* where there is a process in every episode that viewers become familiar with and return to."

There's also been a trend towards adventure travel, says Miles, though even here the emphasis is still on engaging stories. "We have Firecracker Films' *Air Pressure*, which follows young British pilots whose job is to fly and land planes in remote, dangerous parts of Indonesia. You follow the story of their career development, mixed with amazing scenery and



DCD's Billion Pound Hotel

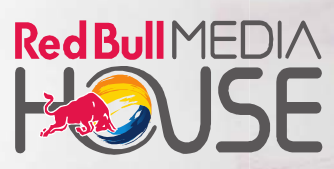


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Cineflix's *Road Rivals*



Passion's *Baggage Battles*

their contact with indigenous peoples.”

Other extreme travel shows that employ clear narrative goals include Travel Channel's *Expedition Unknown*, in which Josh Gates investigates iconic mysteries such as the disappearance of Amelia Earhart's plane. Similar in style is Discovery Networks International's *Ed Stafford Trailblazer*. In this series, explorer Stafford, who is famed for walking the Amazon and appearing in the nude of *Naked and Marooned*, sets out to discover the truth behind mysterious satellite images of Earth's most remote locations.

Beyond Distribution is another company with a broad slate of travel shows. “We have quite a few where the intention has been to build up a strand such as *Anh Does Brazil* and *Anh Does Italy* as well as *My France With Manu*,” says head of sales Munia Kanna-Konsek. “*The Holiday Show* is pure fun holiday destinations, while one of our feature launches at MIPCOM was *Boy to Man*, an adventure travel series which takes the viewer on an epic quest to discover what it means to become a man.”

Kanna-Konsek likes the genre because it is possible to produce travel shows with the kind

of co-viewing appeal that provides schedulers with flexibility. “The pan-satellite channels such as Discovery and Scripps' Food and Travel networks are good homes, but our other big buyers are free-to-air networks, cable and satellite channels, VOD platforms and DVD – any territory where we can window,” she says.

In terms of trends, Kanna-Konsek says “everyone is always looking for the next new thing and I believe these genres are cyclical. First it could be adventure travel, then food travel then a combination of both, then observational. Celebrities can give you the edge but now we are also seeing a good deal of programmes where viewer material, using their GoPro footage, is included. Also, food/travel hybrids like *World's Weirdest Restaurants*, *Chuck's Week Off: Mexico*, and *BBQ Crawl* do well for us”.

While many of the shows above are targeted at primetime, Off The Fence managing director, distribution Bo Stehmeier says more traditional long-running travel series can play a key role in access or shoulder prime. “The right travel series can do a great job for broadcasters that need a strong access primetime, but don't have budgets for local production,” he says. “Depending on the channel profile you can go for a series that skews young male, more adrenalin-adventure focused, or young female, more shopping-luxury focused, and then look for an airline or tourism sponsor to offset the cost of the acquisition.”

Travel also works well for broadcasters that are running a single feed to multiple destinations, says Stehmeier. “These channels need to constantly prove to subscribers they are relevant to keep them engaged,” he says, “so travel shows with a mix of cultures and destinations work well. We have established series like the 50x60mins *Travel Bug* and 40x30mins *Raw Travel*, which have volume, a spread of destinations and skew young. New titles in our slate include *Wonders of...*, *Finding Little Italy* and *Rock the Park*, which taps into America's love affair with its national parks.”

Another sub-set of travel that Stehmeier points out is the kind of high-end show that “platforms can use to show off their HD or 4K capabilities. We have an HD show called *Aerial America* that captures this beautifully. This is often a very gentle, serene kind of programming, but it can play out nicely in the background on some factual channels”.

Travel is then one of those genres where it is possible to forge close links between content and brands, so it is timely to observe that global



BUYERS BRIEFING: TRAVEL CHANNEL



Scripps Networks Interactive's Travel Channel has about 450 hours of new content coming down the pipe each year, says Ross Babbit, the US cable network's senior VP programming.

"The DNA of all our shows is great storytelling and characters. Shows like *Booze Traveler* with Jack Maxwell and *Bizarre Foods* with Andrew Zimmern have the kind of authenticity that audiences love because they are based around incredibly passionate people."

Editorially, the channel seeks to celebrate world culture, but it is not shy of tackling tough issues, says Babbit. "We've just premiered *Breaking Borders*, a show that travels to places that have a history of conflict and gets people from opposite sides to share a meal and conversation. Where we probably do differ from other factual channels is that we would stop short of the more salacious travel shows."

In term of trends, he points to adventure series like *Expedition Unknown* and says he is happy to include some advertiser-funded programmes in the schedule. "We did *World's Best Bartender* with Diageo, which worked well, but identifying quality programming has to be the priority," he says.

film. Underlining the fact that the travel genre is no longer just about what features on TV screens, Marriott has also signed deals with various YouTube stars in the sector. The aim, says David Beebe, VP, creative and content marketing, global marketing, is "to become the leading publisher of travel lifestyle content that engages travellers and builds Marriott's reputation as the world's favourite travel company."

Beebe's is no stranger to TV, having held key digital posts at Fishbowl Worldwide and ABC.

One of the YouTubers signed up by Marriott is Jack Harries, an online success story who underlines the fact that TV travel shows need to pay attention to what's happening in digital.

Harries launched YouTube channel JacksGap in 2011 to chart his gap year experience. Today, the channel – which now involves his brother Finn – has close to four million subscribers. The vast majority are teenage girls, reinforcing the idea that the TV's endless efforts to attract young viewers will probably soon involve the poaching of YouTube talent to front TV programming. **TBI**

hotel/hospitality firm Marriott International has been named as MIPTV 2015's Brand of the Year in recognition of its global content studio, which is working with producers to develop a content marketing strategy based around travel.

One of its first projects is the short film *Two Bellmen*, a collaboration with dance, martial arts and music collective Substance Over Hype, which features the JW Marriott Los Angeles L.A. LIVE hotel as a character in the



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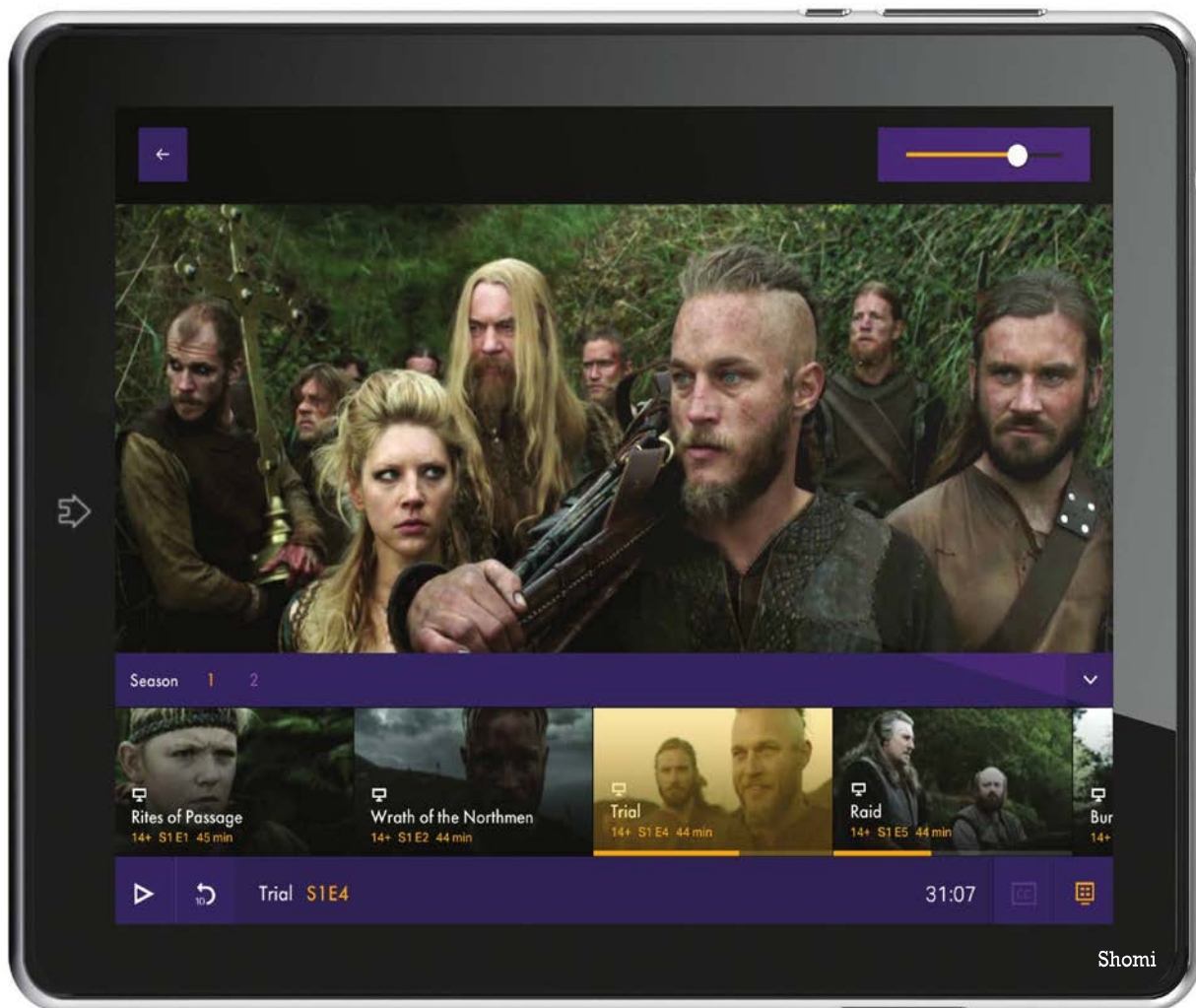


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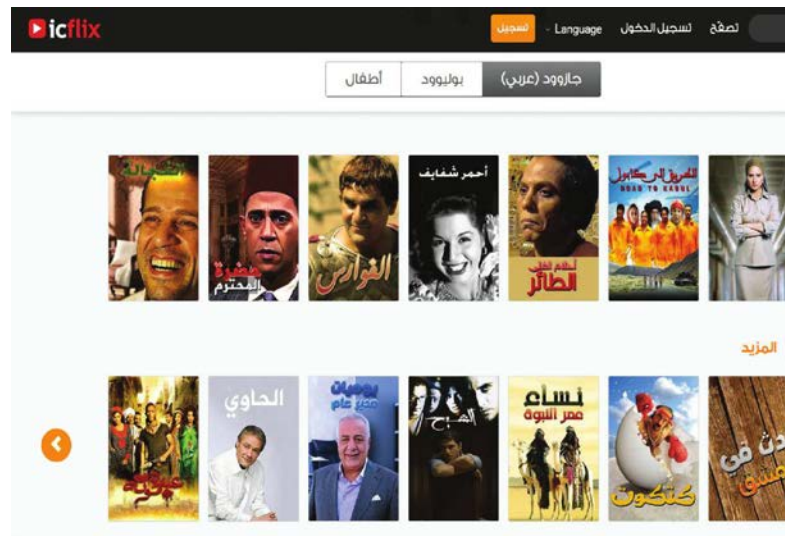
# Curation: the new dark art

Now that streaming platforms can build a much more accurate picture of their subscribers' behaviour and use this data to deliver content tailored to their needs and tastes, curation has become all-important. Bob Jenkins reports

**“Y**ou can please some of the people all of the time and all of the people some of the time, but you can't please all of the people all of the time". Unless, that is, you work in OTT. The new medium's ability to deliver what people want, when they want it, and on the device they want it, is one crucial difference, possibly the crucial difference, between streaming and its linear forbearer, already referred to by many as 'legacy television'.

One key element in OTT's ability to overturn the opening observation of John Lydgate (a 15th century English monk and poet from whom Lincoln pinched the observation) is the art known as 'content curation'; not to be confused with linear TV's famous dark art of scheduling.

This is the view of Jason Cosgrove, director of business development at digital prodco and MCN operator Defy Media. He is clear that "curation is something quite distinct from scheduling". He adds: "With the proliferation of apps on mobile, tablets and OTT we are finding different



audiences gather on different platforms looking for different experiences.

“For example when it comes to our Break app, we have both short form and long form content offerings,” he says. “A mobile user isn’t necessarily looking to watch a feature film in the middle of the day, but that same user might visit our Roku app at the end of the day and join us to watch a movie. We’re curating what we put where and when we put it there, and, with the real-time data we are able to see [activity] on each platform and make timely programme changes in response.”

Sohail Anjum, digital marketing manager at UAE-based OTT service icflix agrees with Cosgrove that curating is important and that a reading of a users’ behaviour is a key element in that process. “Scheduling”, says Anjum, “refers to arranging or planning content, while curating is more about using professional or expert skills or knowledge to discover and select content that is relevant to your audience, and then organising and presenting it in a targeted way.”

“You need to learn what people’s tastes are, and also to learn about their needs and preferences, and then tailor the content offering for them,” he adds. “Within each country in which we operate, we localise the content so that, as viewing habits change, we change along with them. This makes curating content a very important part of what we do at icflix”.

Don Klees, vice president, programming, at Acorn Media Group,

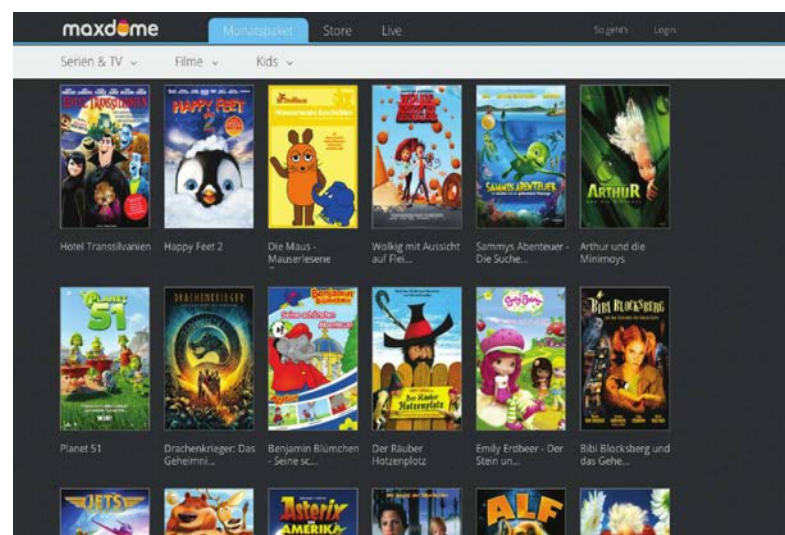
says: “Curating content is not just an important part of what I do – it is what I do.” Klees accepts that while scheduling the presentation of new programming – or old favourites – can be useful in helping an audience to find their next favourite programme, the overall offer has to justify their time and attention, meaning “curating and scheduling are absolutely different things”.

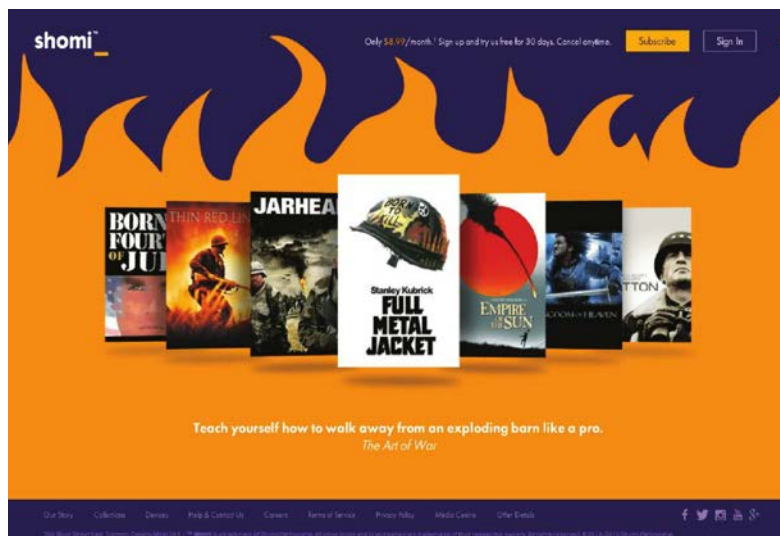
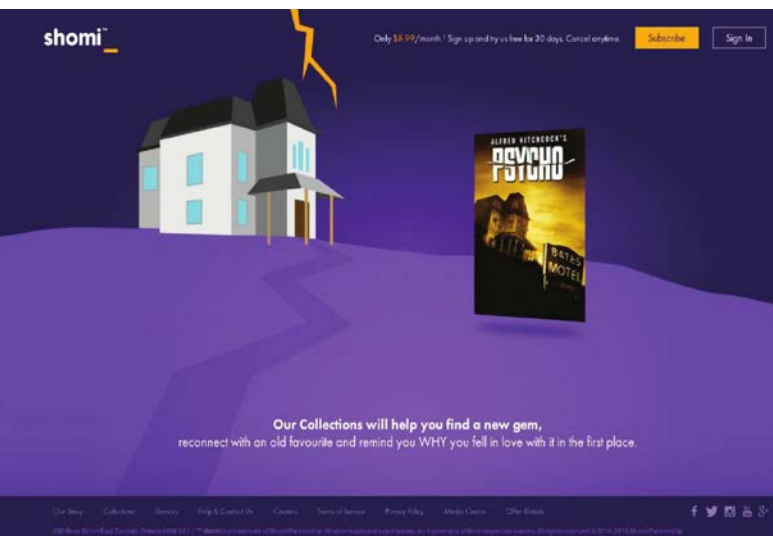
Lesley MacKenzie is managing director of a leading German SVOD platform, Maxdome. She says there is an element of semantics in the distinctions between ‘curating’ and ‘scheduling’.

“While ‘scheduling’ is terminology and a mechanism of the linear TV world, which requires a sequential order of content to be aired following specific timings, ‘curating’ is instead about selecting content based on editorial decisions,” she says. “To this extent, both linear and OTT services may be said to be ‘curated’, while ‘scheduling’ is not necessary on an OTT service, as content is available everywhere and at any time”.

For those who built careers on their understanding of the art of scheduling, perhaps the really frightening thing about the new art of curating is that it is child’s play. Or, at least, that is the view of Canada’s SVOD service Shomi.

The streaming joint venture between Shaw Communications and Rogers Communications announced in March that, for one week only, it





would be offering three different collections, all chosen, or curated, by the kids of the platform’s staff.

The packages were for under fives, including titles such as *Tuff Puppy*, *Blue’s Clues* and *Animal Mechanical*. A second package for 6-9s included *Johnny Test*, *Hotel Transylvania* and *Scooby Doo*, while the third package for 10-13s, offered *Batman*, *Boy Meets World* and *iCarly*.

Marni Shulman, Shomi’s head of content and programming says: “One of the things that sets us apart – and that I love most about my role here – is the human curation factor. We really wanted to walk the walk with that, so taking the lead from our own kids for these three special collections was an obvious choice.”

This curating experiment is especially interesting given that historically, the kids audience differed from that of other age groups as the people often making the viewing choices – the parents – are not part of the audience they are addressing.

The importance of the role of content curation should not be underestimated, says Maxdome’s MacKenzie, noting there are different methods to accomplish the task. “There are a number of ways in which it can be done. Some services might choose to select content based on algorithms, but at Maxdome we combine editorial and market specific insights with analysis of viewing patterns to enable us to select the relevant

content for our customers”.

At the heart of the OTT curation challenge is how to guide users to the content they want to watch. This throws up some interesting comparisons between library content and the premium titles that command top dollar in the market.

Acorn is a service that specialises in delivering the best of British content. Klees says: “Acorn not only offers viewers in North America the opportunity to stream many of their favourite programmes, but, more importantly, it also offers them the chance to discover classic shows, previously unavailable to audiences in the US and Canada”.

Klees makes a comparison between classic titles and newer programming. “An archival title is more likely to have proven itself a good fit – or not – for Acorn TV,” he adds. “A new title on the other hand, however highly touted, is always going to be a bit of a wild card. When you’re competing for new titles with other OTT services and broadcasters, you’re often placing large bets on unproven programming.”

For Defy’s Cosgrove there is a balancing act involved. “When we’re programming content we certainly do want to highlight what’s new and exciting, but, at the same time, we want users to have access to the videos that made them fall in love with our brand to begin with,” he says. “There certainly is a focus for us on showing what’s new from our brands, and



# THE INVASION

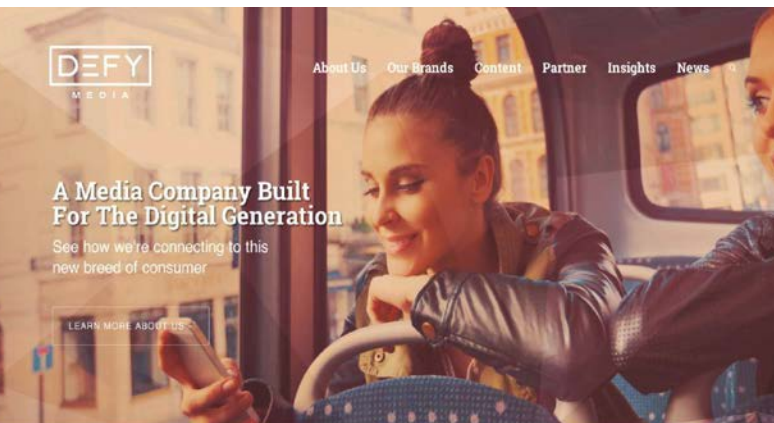
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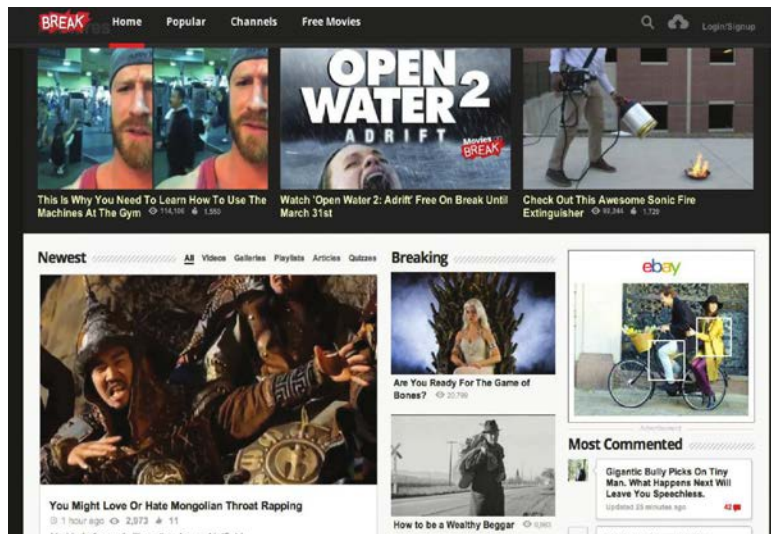
you will certainly always find the newest episodes featured prominently. But in the case of *Movies On Break*, in one sense at least, the entire library is archive. Therefore, we are always curating that library to bring a fresh perspective to content people are already familiar with."

Success in the online environment is, then, not necessarily all about the biggest blockbusters. "In an on-demand world, a service not only needs to select relevant content, it also needs to present it in a way that provides editorial guidance to its users," Maxdome's MacKenzie says. "Our users make selections based both on the way in which the content is presented, and also on the environment in which it is presented. Thoughtful curation helps our users make a decision, in that critical moment and can drive attention to titles which are not necessarily blockbusters".

The need for curation to aid a user in the on-demand world is heightened when so many services, even those that are less well-known, have such a high volume of content on offer.

Reliance Majestic's UK and North American on-demand platform CinemaNow has deals with all the major Hollywood studios, allowing it to offer over 30,000 movies, including new releases.

Donna Smith, VP, new business, says: "We also offer all the most recent TV hits from all the major broadcasters and producers including many classic boxed set series as well as documentaries from indie producers and



small publishers, meaning that we currently offer a wider selection of TV than either HBO or Showtime".

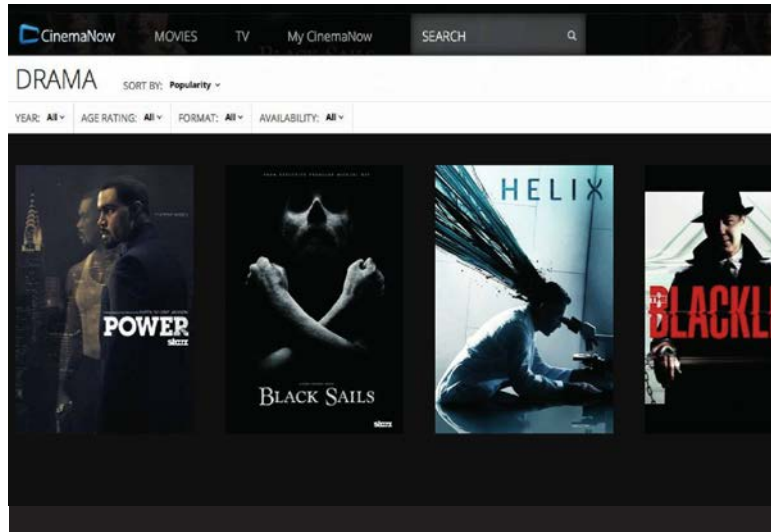
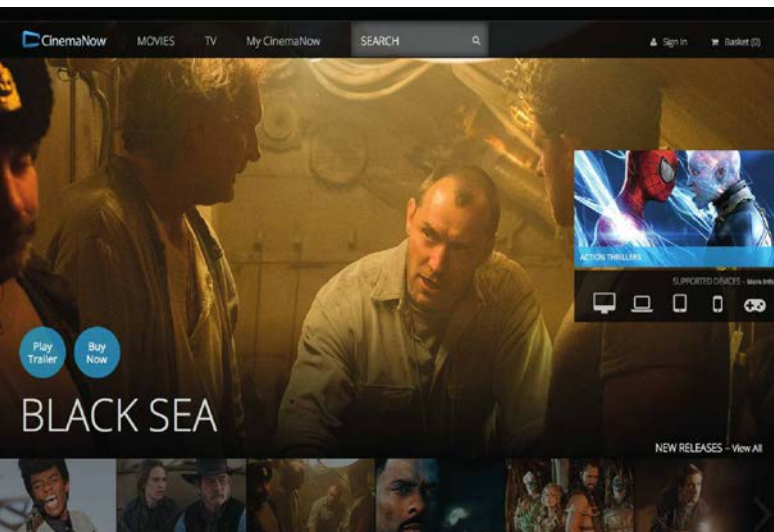
Even if the need for curation is created by the sheer quantity of content offered on platforms such as CinemaNow, it is clear that it is already much more than a digital library system.

Curation is first and foremost the process of knowing what users of a service want, and when, and how they want it delivered. As the means of monitoring users' behaviour grow more sophisticated, it is likely that the significance of curation on the SVOD business will grow.

"It is too early, at this point, to say that curation goals are driving original programming and acquisition decisions," Defy's Cosgrove says, "but the learnings we are taking away from our curation efforts certainly are providing insight into what programming our audience gravitates towards, and that is informing future programming".

For Acorn's Klees it's certainly not too early to make the connection. "Other than financial considerations, I am not sure that 'curation' and acquisitions policy' can really be separated for Acorn TV," he says.

Of course, broadcasters have always sought to monitor the popularity of content they offer, and to modify editorial decisions accordingly. There's nothing new in that. What is new are both the accuracy of this information and its ability to be read in real time. **TBI**





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# Blue chip to new chip: natural history with bite



A Barcroft TV YouTube video

**Stewart Clarke speaks to commissioners, producers, distributors and digital pioneers about their efforts to reimagine the natural history genre**

**A**lastair Fothergill is the embodiment of blue-chip, making landmark series for the BBC and films for Disney Nature, but he is now seeking to reinvent the genre, out of necessity as much as anything.

“When I came to the end of *Frozen Planet* I wondered if there was a habitat left we haven’t done?,” he says. “So I started to think about behavior.” The result is BBC and NDR series *The Hunt*, which looks at predators and prey in a new way. In terms of making the series, Fothergill says he was influenced by TV drama, and attempted to film some of the action as if it were a chase scene in a scripted series.

“The problem is there is an awful lot of very good natural history, and the audience has seen a lot, so [producers] need to enhance the experience,” he says. “But I’m not into experimenting for the sake of it, and I don’t want camera techniques to get between the viewer and the animals.”

Anthony Geffen’s Atlantic’s Productions has been at the forefront of using new filming

techniques and technology, from 3D to a recent push into virtual reality, but he echoes Fothergill's sentiment. "You have to be careful with technology," he says. "It is only good if it fits the narrative style – just finding and using a new camera is not enough."

New tech and technical solutions, however, applied properly, can bring something new to the natural history genre. Wildlife producer Earth Touch tackled the perennial challenge of filming nocturnal animal behaviour in its series *Hippos After Dark*, which was recently picked up by Nat Geo Wild internationally.

"The challenge of filming at night has always been a daunting one," says the indie's creative director, Graeme Duane. "It is not only because of the obvious lack of light, but because of the lack of detail in any picture, and the myopia of being stuck in a dark, grainy space also weighs heavily on viewer tolerances."

Earth Touch's answer with *Hippos* was to add infrared light, 4K colouring and thermal imaging. "Using all of these bits of technology,



Anthony Geffen has been pushing the envelope in natural history

which are merely adapted from readily-available commercial products, we're building a view of the night that viewers haven't seen

before. Instead of grainy, spot-lit *Blair Witch* type images, we're seeing some full-colour and high-action with a clean image, and a great sense of depth."

Having benefitted from the move to high definition, producers and distributors are now pushing into ultra HD, or 4K, amid early talk of 8K. In terms of filmmaking, it means a return to classic, awe-inspiring docs that can portray the new standard on huge sets.

"The initial focus [for 4K] will be on showcasing the beauty and wonder of the world," says Solange Attwood, senior VP at Canada-based producer and distributor Blue Ant Media. It recently set out to produce 200 hours of 4K content annually.

Blue Ant's early offerings include 13x30mins *The Big Feed* about zoo animals, 3x60mins *Land of Gremlins*, about the wildlife of Madagascar and 5x60mins *Arctic Secrets*, about the animals and plants of the Polar region.

The number of 4K customers is currently limited, but opening up, Attwood says. "A number of international buyers are interested in launching 4k channels and certainly, with the wider digital disruption in the industry, there is a lot of opportunity in VOD."

Off The Fence is producing some of the 4K content for Blue Ant. Its distribution boss, Bo Stehmeier, says the HD-to-UHD transition is akin to the shift from SD-to-HD, but quicker. "It is very similar, but everything spins faster now," he says. "When we first heard of 'HD' it was three years before we saw it. With '4K' it will be eighteen months. Wildlife is perfect

## DIGITAL WILDLIFE: FROM YOUTUBE TO TELEVISION

Amid the talk of reinventing blue-chip and natural history, digital-savvy content companies are looking at how online platforms can be a low-cost seeding ground for a new form of wildlife show.

Barcroft Media is pioneering a model whereby content proves it has an audience on YouTube and is then developed into full-fledged series. The success of YouTube clips such as 'snake devours crocodile' (41 million views and counting) and 'flying lion' (currently at 48 million views) on YouTube channel Barcroft TV illustrate the demand.

"The traditional BBC [natural history] over the last few years has been exhaustive and amazing, but has run its course with some viewers; there is a little weariness," Barcroft founder Sam Barcroft says. "If you look at how people want to consume, and what it is they want to know, you will see they are fascinated by conflict in the animal kingdom, and those [clips] feel super authentic."

The voyeuristic excitement of watching UGC resonates particularly with a young male demo, which is increasingly hard to reach on TV. The other area Barcroft pinpoints is human stories about people that have strong connections with animals – such as the 'man who can swim with a polar bear' (31 million views and used in Google's own review of the year). The success of the polar bear clip led to a series commission for *Preposterous Pets* from Discovery's international Animal Planet channel. The aforementioned flying lion clip proved the jumping off point for viral video show *Chaos Caught on Camera*, greenlit by Discovery and debuting on its Science Channel in April.

Moving from YouTube to linear, however, involves more than just repackaging clips, Barcroft says. "You need to take a novel approach and integrate pop science and other elements to decode what has been taken from online."

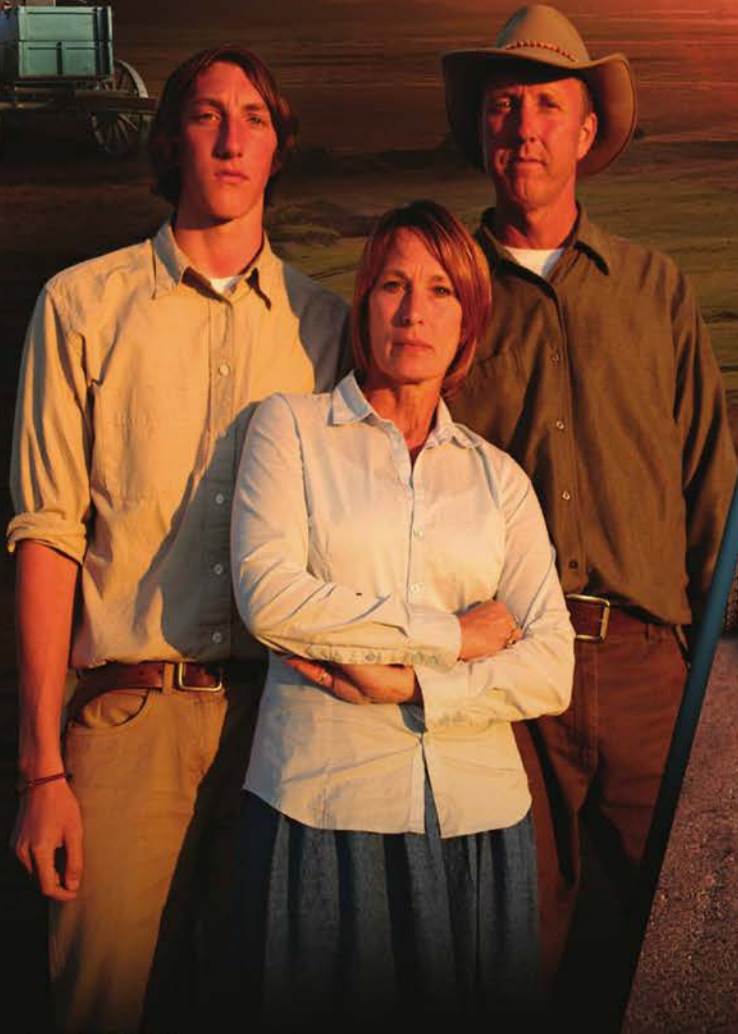
Barcroft is also now producing longer-form online content that will debut on YouTube and will then, it hopes, be acquired for television. The first of these self-funded projects includes shark series *Landing Sharks*.

There is a little weariness of traditional natural history shows  
**Sam Barcroft**



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for 4K. At first the [shows] will be about the enjoyment of nature.

“If you are a content producer or distributor and can promise a supply of 4K, you can get a premium position because you have something that not many people can deliver.”

With *The Hunt*, as well as shooting in 4K, Fothergill’s team also used new cameras to allow super-stable up-close footage that makes the viewer feel as if they are in the chase, without the isolating effect that results from some long lens shooting. Rethinking the audio was also key with Fothergill drafting in Steven Price, fresh from his Academy Award win for the *Gravity* score.

“It’s not a traditional orchestral score and that reflects the new visual style,” says Fothergill. “We deliberately wanted to change things big-time with *The Hunt*. There is less orchestral sound and more playing with sound in a creative way. We put Steven with a dubbing editor from the Natural History Unit and he used sound effects as part of the score.”

Proving that innovation is not the preserve of the younger generation, Sir David Attenborough has been pushing the envelope in his shows with Atlantic. The UK prodco has forged a natural history pedigree through its shows with Attenborough, the best-known presenter in the genre, including a new three-parter, *Attenborough’s Great Barrier Reef*.

“When David and I got together ten productions ago, we talked about doing things in a different way,” says Atlantic’s Geffen. “The first thing we did [origins of life doc *First Life*] could have been just dusty rocks and fossils, but we used animation in an innovative way. Then we moved into stereoscopic 3D and David has embraced that too, as long as it is always driven by the story.”

The advent of new platforms, meanwhile, is changing the wider landscape. Netflix is following up *Virunga*, its Academy Award-nominated feature doc about park rangers in the titular Congolese national park, with more environment-themed fare, which will be made under the terms of a pact with Leonardo DiCaprio’s Appian Way prodco.

SVOD services are not beholden to ratings and ad sales requirements, freeing them to pursue niche audiences and subjects. The growth of OTT will also, producers hope, help offset a dwindling numbers of free-to-air slots for natural history, a situation exacerbated by an increasing amount of drama in schedules

as the genre basks in an ongoing golden age.

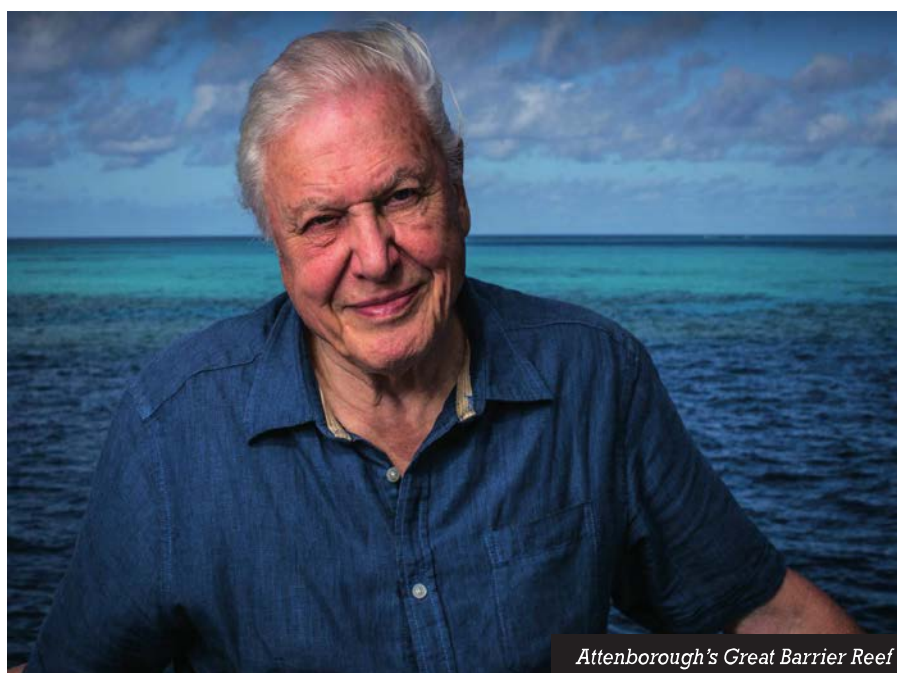
“The production community is frustrated because scripted fills primetime, but as primetime moves that way, OTT platforms can re-open space for natural history,” says one European wildlife producer.

Off *The Fence*’s Stehmeier says: “Factual is produced for TV because TV is the main financier, but when you look at all of the narratives out there, you wonder if they need to be made into 30- or 60-minute shows. Maybe they could be condensed into 12 minutes, or could run longer. Linear commissions are 30-

or 60-minutes because of advertising; in the future it will become more free-form, which will let the content breathe.”

Rich Ross, the former Shine US boss and now head of Discovery Channel in the States, also signalled a change in the direction of factual when he told journalists at the US winter press tour in January that it would stop ‘faking it’, meaning no more *Mermaids: The Body Found* or *Megalodon: The Monster Shark Lives*, which was part of the popular Shark Week event on Discovery.

“I don’t think it’s right for Discovery



*Attenborough’s Great Barrier Reef*



*The Hunt: Fothergill on shoot*



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## PHIL CRAIG TALKS NEW CHIP

Ex-Nutopia and ABC Australia executive Phil Craig started in his new role as executive VP and chief creative officer at Discovery in March, unveiling his first five-strong slate of programmes soon after.

The quintet included Discovery's first solo effort in natural history. "We hadn't commissioned natural history before, but it is a genre we know people love and we have now greenlit one show and are looking for more," he says. "It is important that we do that and see DNI establish itself as a home for natural history."

Discovery's requirements in this area are exacerbated by the end of a deal with the BBC that saw it invest alongside the UK pubcaster in blue-chip series including *Life* and *Blue Planet*. Dubbing DNI's new approach 'new chip', Craig says that, ultimately, it can match its former partner's efforts in this area: "In the future, there is no reason we can't even rival the BBC," he says.

The first natural history commission is *Life of Dogs* (WT). Grant Mansfield's Plimsoll is making the canine-themed series, which will debut next year. Using a 'unique blending of traditional blue chip natural history with a new style of immersive, revelatory, storytelling' it will look at the history of dogs and their close relationship with man. "It is about the evolution of two species and will be beautiful and inspiring," says Craig.

It is a 'new chip' show, he adds, which means bringing an energised popular style to factual filmmaking. US content chief Rich Ross has spoken about Discovery Channel returning to core values, but that doesn't mean a return to old production styles, according to Craig. He wants the production community to help him to further define 'new chip', but expects shows in this category to be both authentic and entertaining.

"It is about programming with a sense of purpose and inspiration," he says. "When people come to a Discovery show they should expect to be entertained; we're not selling homework and we operate in a competitive environment," he says.

In natural history terms, new chip means beautifully shot shows, but with added components. "There is no shortage of beautiful images of animals, but there is a shortage of storytellers," Craig says. "The tendency has been to lapse into a survey style. We want to work with natural history filmmakers that tell stories in the same way as you'd expect with drama. You might draw people in for four or five minutes with beautiful wildlife, but to keep viewers you need to surprise them and offer first class storytelling."

Discovery's first choice will still be to fully fund and take all rights, although the new Discovery exec says it will now keep an open mind if partners are already attached, with several possible copros currently on his desk. That's another sign of change in the factual business.

Channel, and think it's something that has run its course," he said. "They've done very well, but I don't think it's something that's right for us."

Speaking about *Eaten Alive*, the failed stunt show in which a park ranger attempted to be swallowed by a snake on camera, he added: "I don't believe you'll see a person being eaten by a snake in my time."

Discovery was, of course, not the only channel to use CGI to recreate mythical or long-extinct beasts with the likes of *Walking with Dinosaurs* having proved popular on the BBC and internationally. The trend didn't sit well with everyone in the docs business.

"When the BBC was drawing dinosaurs I feel 90% of people thought dinosaurs were alive because it was hard to tell the difference between CGI and re-enactment," says Esther van Messell, founder of European doc producer and distributor First Hand Films.

If the likes of Attenborough, Fothergill and Discovery are looking at new ways to present natural history, so are other producers that have not previously played in this space.

"Most natural history is 'factoid'; it is 'here is a parakeet and here is its mating routine', and beyond the context of 'it's from this part of the world', there is no effort to do any narrative," says World Media Rights CEO Alan Griffiths.

His indie prodco's answer was to take its successful *Black Ops* military action doc series to the animal world

*Animal Black Ops* will use the same drama reconstruction approach used in the original series to tell the story of animals preyed on by poachers, and law enforcement agencies efforts to capture them.

Animal Planet US has ordered a ten-part series and ITV Studios Global Entertainment has invested and taken international rights. "It's an extension of the normal natural history genre, which is needed as it is a genre that hasn't really moved on," Griffiths says.

Meanwhile, the next frontier could be a virtual one. Atlantic has a big multiplatform, TV and virtual reality project in the works for 2016 although details are scant.

"It is the first of its kind, taking you on a journey that goes across different platforms – it is where the future of high-end is going," Atlantic's Geffen says. "We need new experiences that are very different, and VR is a whole new storytelling device." **TBI**



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# Holding court with Chelli

Claude Chelli from Capa Drama on what to expect from Canal+'s lavish Louis XIV drama *Versailles*

Using the building of a now-famous structure as the backdrop to a scripted series is a tried-and-tested method – AMC's *Hell on Wheels*' story about the creation of the Transcontinental Railway is just one recent example. The writers and producers behind *Versailles* have taken that blueprint and transferred it to the building of the French royal palace in 1667.

The show focuses on the megalomaniacal ambitions of a young King Louis XIV. Having recently lost his mother, the ruler decides to consolidate the monarchy by creating a palace on the site of his father's hunting lodge, in the process attaching all nobles directly to his court.

"Louis wanted to build absolute power," says Claude Chelli, head of coproducer Capa Drama. "It's basically the story of a 28-year-old man who starts to build Versailles, although not the palace we know today.

"We didn't want to do a historical drama – that's not the right label; this is about kids getting into power," he continues. "The setting is just a backdrop for the story. *Versailles* is about applying dramatic codes to a historical context."

The English-language show focuses on Louis and his attempts to disempower those around him, including his brother, Monsieur, an openly gay warrior. Monsieur's capacity for love contrasts with the young king's lust for power, and in this sense *Versailles* is a psychological study as much as a serialised drama.

Chelli notes the histories of co-writers and showrunners Simon Mirren and David Wolstencroft – who took on the project after the exit of Andre and Maria Jacquemetton – as proof. "This is about the mind of Louis

### In focus

**Format:** 10x52mins series from Capa Drama, Canal+, Zodiak France and Incendo. Zodiak Rights has international sales rights

**Cast:** George Blagden (*Vikings*) as Louis XIV, Alexander Vlahos (*Merlin*) as Monsieur. "We have some of the best up-and-coming actors in the English game," says Claude Chelli



executive producer and showrunner]. There is a connection there," says Chelli. "Then we found that David had studied Louis at Cambridge."

Canal+ commissioned the show as a branded Canal+ Original Creation. It has been long in the making, but there will be a finished episode for buyers at MIPTV. Funding to the tune of 20% of the budget came from Canadian coproducer Incendo with the other 80% equally shared between Capa and Zodiak France. This, in part, allowed the production to take place in France, historically not the easiest place to

produce, given taxes and requirements for a fully French crew. Some purists will question the decision to shoot in English, but the explanation is simple enough, says Chelli. "To get that kind of budget you have to create in English, there's no question," he says. "A standard French drama is maybe €1.2 million [US\$1.3 million] per episode and this was about €2.5 million. Shooting in English was the only solution. We will be criticised by some of the Parisian press, but people who make series will understand what we have done." **S**

**In focus**

**Format:** 2x120mins / 4x60mins miniseries

**Positioning:** Lifetime's latest fictional biopic miniseries aims to shed light on the side of Marilyn Monroe few know existed

**Talent:** Kelli Garner as Monroe; Susan Sarandon as Gladys Baker, Marilyn's schizophrenic mother; Emily Watson as Grace McKee, Norma Jeane's guardian; Jeffrey Dean Morgan as Joe DiMaggio; Stephen Bogaert as Arthur Miller

# Marilyn Framing an icon

**Lifetime's telemovie supremo Tanya Lopez on how the network approached America's original sweetheart**

Successfully framing a global icon is always a challenge for TV companies, but Lifetime has more experience than most. In the past 12 months alone it has told the stories of singers Whitney Houston and Aaliyah, but tackling the myth of Marilyn Monroe was a bigger undertaking altogether.

Lifetime's senior VP of original movies, Tanya Lopez, says the channel's effort to depict the woman who came to define Hollywood-style femininity and 20th century sexuality differs from others because "what this film does is really show the vulnerable side of Marilyn, or Norma Jeane, as she was first known".

Using the narrative device of a therapist's chair, the Asylum Entertainment-produced show stars Kelli Garner (*Pan Am*) as a damaged Monroe looking back at the key moments in her life, including marriages to baseball star Joe DiMaggio and playwright Arthur Miller, her emergence as a star and her troublesome relationship with her bi-polar mother, played by modern-day movie star, Susan Sarandon (*Thelma & Louise*).

That mother-daughter relationship plays a most significant role in *The Secret Life of Marilyn Monroe*. "The film looks at Marilyn's emergence from Norma Jayne into the Marilyn we know, and at the ghosts of her past that she carried with her," says Lopez.

"Her mother really had such an effect on her and left a deep scar that all the accolades, love and adoration could not replace.

"This is about her most authentic side," adds Lopez. "The image we have, putting this woman on a pedestal – a woman who embodies everything about beauty and sexuality – is challenged. We learn she is actually an everyday woman."

*Marilyn* is based on J. Randy Taraborrelli's book *The Secret Life of Marilyn Monroe*, which explored the darker side of the siren's life. It landed with A+E a few years back.

"We were surprised [when the project came to us], as you do think you know everything about her," says Lopez. "Once we'd read the book, we developed it and wanted to see if we could translate it into a film. There really are secrets the audience will learn." **S**



▪ TEMPLETON

▪ NINA

▪ WITNESSES  
[LES TÉMOINS]

▪ CANDICE RENOIR

FICTION

GONE UP  
IN SMOKE

▪ THE UNEXPECTED GETAWAY

HARRY

FORMAT

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# Wolf Hall:

period drama with ratings bite

MYSTERY IS EVERYWHERE

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DRAMA / 6x52'

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THRILLER"

Le Monde

"AMONG THE BEST  
FOREIGN THRILLERS"

Le Figaro

"STYLISHLY FILMED  
AND CREEPY AS HELL,  
*WITNESSES* IS GRIPPING  
FROM THE OUTSET"

The Sidney Morning Herald

"THERE'S A CINEMATIC  
SENSIBILITY AND ELEGANCE  
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**In focus**

**Format:** 6x60mins/3x120mins  
historical event miniseries

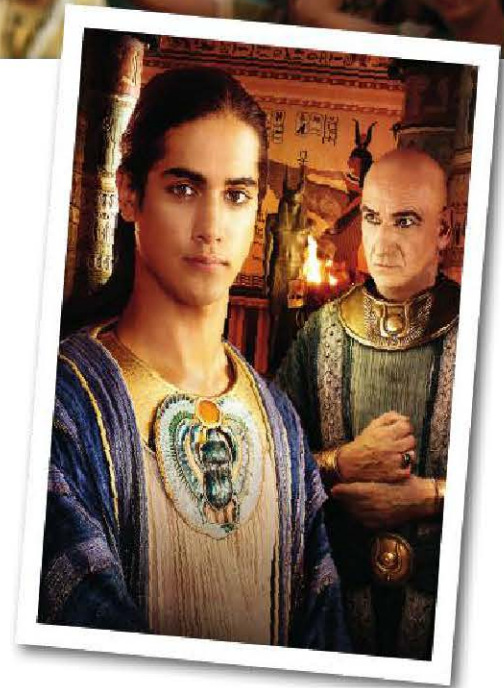
**Positioning:** Beat other projects to become Spike's first miniseries in eight years as it transitions from a purely male-skewed channel to a more balanced proposition

**Talent:** Sir Ben Kingsley plays Ay, the grand vizier to the young King Tutankhamun, who wields vast power. "When we thought of the cast, Ben Kingsley was first choice for Ay and we were delighted to find out he was interested in the role after reading the script," says producer Michael Prupas. The award-winning actor was also enticed by the opportunity to return to Morocco, where he had filmed 1995 TNT telemovie *Moses*



# Tut - history in the making

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DISTRIBUTION  
FORMAT

**HARRY**

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GAME SHOW**



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**RUN  
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BUZZ**



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**DO NOT LET THE MAGICIANS  
TAKE THE MONEY!**



**AND IF FOR ONE NIGHT,  
YOU WERE TO COOK  
FOR THE PRESIDENT?**

**THE BEST  
DISH  
OF MY LIFE**



**P-1. C50.D51**

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oning and acquisitions executives from some leading linear broadcasters and online about their buying wishlists, and how they negotiate. Exclusive interviews from and Jesse Whittock



SS: An important difference that makes us unique compared with all other television channels is that we are devoting 90 seconds an hour, on the hour, every hour, 365 days a year [to social justice causes]. There are 30 seconds dedicated to catching a 'bad guy of the week', 30 seconds helping identify a missing child, and a 30-second family safety tip, often with a seasonal focus. We are going to be making a library of these that we will rotate every week, maybe doing it more frequently for missing kids and safety tips. We're literally putting our money where our mouth is by taking inventory away every hour.

**TBI: What impact are you hoping to have with this strategy?**

SS: Coming from National Geographic Channel, which was a mission-based channel, I'm proud Justice Network is also launching as a mission-based channel. Yes, we will have entertaining programmes from one of the best libraries out there [Turner], but it also has a real societal purpose that is providing something for the communities we launch in.

**TBI: Does this play into your original content strategy?**

SS: With every few exceptions – I can recall one other from the past – no multicast channels produce original content. We feel that it will make a difference. We're taking a page from what *America's Most Wanted* did at 9pm on Saturday nights on Fox, but doing it 24/7.

**TBI: Tell us about the programming offer.**

SS: The guts of our library from launch are from the Turner library – 450 hours. We also have *Alaska State Troopers* from a network I'm quite familiar with: National Geographic Channel. That's a show, ironically, I commissioned in the first place. We're had close to 600 hours – how many multicast channels have that at launch? The common denominator [with other channels] is what makes crime and

investigation, mystery factual entertainment television so sticky: great storytelling.

The whodunit element is almost addictive, like caramel popcorn.

**TBI: Why launch in the multicast space?**

SS: The multicast space has a lot of momentum, and is a really interesting way to deliver good content to underserved consumers that can't afford pay television.

**TBI: Despite that, the crime space is very crowded. Can you compete?**

SS: Globally, there are lots of channels that focus on the crime and investigation space. In the American [multicast] market that we're competing in – at least initially – there's really only one channel of consequence competing, Investigation Discovery, that is branded as 'all crime, all the time'.

**TBI: But ID's popularity is a huge challenge in this space.**

SS: I'm a huge fan of ID. The management has done an amazing job of branding and commissioning content, and their success and growth speaks for itself, both in impression and distribution. Frankly, they are inspiring, and I don't view them so much as a direct competitor as an inspiration. To get ID, you have to pay for the cable or satellite bundle. With our channel you do not – that is a huge difference. There are so many varieties of crime programming, and our audience is going to be different to ID's, for example. We're going to have cable carriage, but we'll be in the hinterlands, whereas ID is in a non-fiction tier. I don't think it will be cannibalistic.

**TBI: What works well on your channel?**

SS: We love series that have great storytelling. What we're looking for is storytelling that really grabs the viewer, makes them intensely interested in characters, and is almost an addictive programming experience. John [Ford, former Discovery Channel president and Justice Network's programming chief] and I have clarity over our brand. We're not going to have gameshows or *I Love Lucy*. It's going to be mystery, crime, investigation and things of that nature. When you are acquiring, you are looking at what is working on the channel already.

**TBI: Where does the channel skew?**

SS: We are definitely skewing towards women. We are looking typically at 25-54 demo, US\$50,000 salary, high school and college... If you look at the demos around the world that watch the *CSI* and *Law and Order* franchises, and those that watch factual entertainment [those factors are common], There's a real clarity with the demo.



**TBI: What channels do you buy for, and how do their needs differ?**

VR: My prime responsibility is to buy content for 10 free TV channels, 21 factual channels for 40 countries, 14 movie channels, the online streaming service Viaplay in six countries and eight DTH satellite platforms. This means we cover pretty much all genres and types of channels and platforms in multiple territories, with very different needs. As there's so much great content available, especially for some genres, our focus is creating the most valuable partnerships that can best serve the content needs of our viewers and subscribers while generating best long term returns for our business. I don't think there is another single content acquisition team in the market that buys for so many and such diverse channels, platforms and services.

**TBI: How does it break down?**

VR: For Sweden, Norway and Denmark, we buy for ten free-TV channels, our pay-TV factual channels, premium pay-TV Viasat Film channels, Viasat Crime, the streaming service Viaplay and our AVOD services; our pay TV channels and Viaplay are available in Finland too. All movies on Viasat Film, own-productions and the vast majority of the acquired content on our free-TV and pay-TV channels are also available on Viaplay. In addition, for Viaplay, we buy thousands of hours of quality of content, including exclusive premier series, box-sets, additional movies, exclusive kids' content, as well as the very latest studio premiers for TVOD.

**TBI: What about MTG's other big business area, Eastern Europe?**

VR: For Russia, Ukraine, the Baltics and the CIS, we buy content for our premium and basic movie channels as well as our factual channels. The same content is also available on our local Viaplay service in Russia and Ukraine.

**TBI: How do the free and pay TV offers differ?**

Our free TV channels have different target audiences. The main channels' primetime slots are filled with commissions or live sport during high season; we mainly buy for daytime and prime access as well as marquee series for primetime. For our factual pay TV brands across the Nordics, central and eastern Europe and several African countries we're looking for thematic content, real-history programmes for Viasat History and family nature programmes for Viasat Nature, while Viasat Explore explores the new and unusual from the latest scientific breakthroughs to the everyday lives of the engaging characters. We also have Viasat Crime, which features acquired crime series in the Nordics

and real crime shows in Africa. All in all MTG has over 110 channels available in over 140 countries.

**TBI: Should producers and distributors be seeking out acquisitions people at a local level or is buying handled centrally? Who are the key buyers within your team?**

VR: All of our acquisitions are done centrally from London. The key buyers in my team are George Gioudas, head of VOD acquisitions; and Vicky Watts and Samantha Middleton who buy for SVOD, TVOD and AVOD.

Deniz Tunaboylu heads factual acquisitions, and her and her team also do acquisitions for our Viasat Nature, Viasat History, Viasat Explore, Viasat Crime and TV1000 Balkans. Ilona Berzina and her assistant buys for our Russian and CIS movie channels that are available in Ukraine and the Baltics. Gayle Higginbotham, Philippe D'Imperio, Cherie Cameron and Juliane Miersch for free TV in Scandinavia and Alex Elliot are the buyers for Viasat Film.

**TBI: Do you commission on a pan-regional basis or is original programming country-specific?**

Original programming is commissioned locally. There are also formats that we produce for more than one country, in which case we try to share production costs and resources. Examples of this are *Paradise Hotel* or *Release The Hounds*. The latter was produced in Lithuania by the MTG production companies Strix and Paprika Latino for TV3 in Denmark, TV3 in Sweden and TV3 in Lithuania.

**TBI: How about acquisitions, are they local or pan-territory?**

VR: The vast majority of our content acquisitions are, one way or another, pan-territorial, whether for two, three or 30-plus countries. However, we also buy programmes for one country; especially for our free TV channels or Viaplay. But even deals where we acquire a show for one territory are likely to include one or more shows for other territories too, so if we buy one show for free TV Sweden or Viasat Explore, we may in the same deal buy a programme for free TV in Denmark, Viaplay or Czech free TV.

**TBI: Which studios do you have output/multiyear deals with, and what have been the notable successes from these deals in recent times? What did you pick up from 2014 year's LA Screenings and are there any other US shows interesting you?**

VR: We have volume deals with Sony Pictures Television, NBCUniversal International, Walt Disney, Warner Bros. and Twentieth Century Fox. With most distributors we have multiple volume deals – usually negotiated at the same time – that cover free TV, pay TV, SVOD and TVOD in the Nordics as well as Russia/CIS and/or a number of our CEE territories. With SPT we have had an amazing partnership for content in the Nordics that includes premiers such as *The Blacklist*, *Battle Creek*, *Mozart in the Jungle*, *Marry Me*, *Outlander* and *Transparent* – the latter five came from the 2014 LA Screenings. All series premiered on Viaplay, where they have more impact than on our free TV channels.



**TBI: How does the international business operate alongside the flagship US Nickelodeon channel?**

JB: The international business works very much in sync with the US. We export the domestic content across our networks around the world and bring our international sourced and produced content back to the US.

**TBI: Should producers and distributors be seeking out acquisitions people at a local level or is buying handled centrally? Who are the key buyers within your team?**

JB: We take pitches both centrally and locally. Layla Lewis is based in the US and is responsible for the all central acquisitions that include both the US domestic network and the international channels. We have programming heads that are in charge of their individual markets who share everything that gets submitted to the central group.

**TBI: Do you commission on a pan-regional basis or is original programming country-specific? Do you cover entire budgets, or seek coproduction partners?**

JB: We commission content both locally and pan regionally and either fully finance or seek coproduction partners depending on the project. Acquisitions are both local and international.

**TBI: What are you really looking for at the moment? Is there a genre or specific type of programme you have on your 'shopping list', or are there particular programming slots you are very focused on?**

JB: For all our linear and non-linear platforms we continue to be on the lookout for animation, for both preschool and the 6+ demo. Comedy live-action, as well as serialised formats, are also still high on our wishlist.

**TBI: Which kids market is the most valuable for you in 2015?**

JB: We attend all the major markets including NATPE, Kidscreen, MIPTV and MIPCOM, and Annecy; all of which are valuable in their individual ways.

**TBI: What sort of programming is the kids TV market lacking?**

JB: Today's market is rich with fantastic choice spanning all the genres, from live-action to animation. Nickelodeon is committed to finding fresh voices and new talent, which we do through our shorts programme and our writers' programme among others.

**TBI: What channels do you buy for, what are their headline programming needs?**

ARS: We buy for the entire portfolio, but primarily for Discovery Channel, Discovery Kids, Discovery Home & Health, TLC and Turbo.

**TBI: What shows have been working best on your channels?**

ARS: With Discovery Channel we have had great success on a pan-regional level – across all markets – with shows like *Naked & Afraid* in the adventure genre and with *Fast n Loud* in the automotive category.

In the case of Home & Health we have seen such tremendous growth this past year that is hard to say what is working, so I think there we have had success overall. On Discovery Kids, *Doki* continues to be a strong performer and we have a new season coming up in 2015, and *Peppa Pig* has been a strong show for us as well. With *Hi-5*, we are very excited because aside from the fact that we have multiple seasons of the original series and it has been a part of the network for a very long time, we are getting ready to launch the Latin American version of the show, which we are producing, so we have a lot of activity among the channels and a lot of success.

**TBI: Should producers and distributors seek out acquisitions people at a local level or is buying handled centrally?**

ARS: Buying is handled centrally so it would be our centralised programme sourcing and acquisitions team that is buying for the portfolio.

The exception is Brazil, due to quota requirements, so in that case they handle at the local level certain titles that are specific to their region. Generally speaking, it should be with the centralised team.

**TBI: What is the cycle are there times of year you are focused on buying and pre-buying?**

ARS: The markets tend to trigger the buying, but I would say that at this point it is year round. We see more activity immediately after a particularly large market like MIPCOM, Kidscreen, MIPTV or NATPE, but overall it's a year-round process.

**TBI: Do you commission locally?**

ARS: Yes, we have local commissions not only at a pan-regional level, but also at a local level in all our main markets, and we also produce original content as well as local formats of certain shows.



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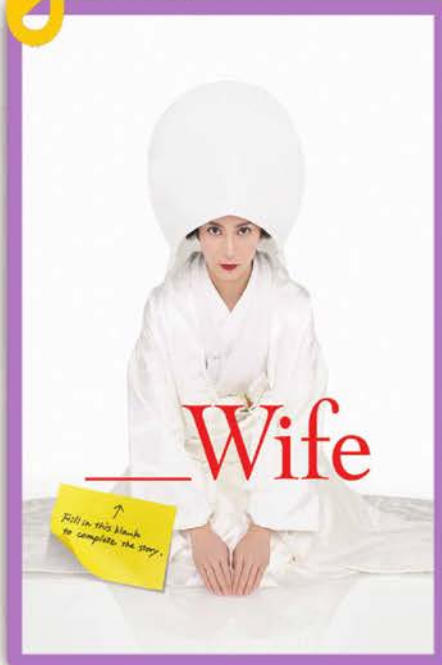
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## Drama



## Drama



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# BBC Worldwide channels energies into Brit, Earth and First



With the creation of the BBC Brit, Earth and First brands, BBC Worldwide is aiming to cement a place in the line-ups of pay TV platforms around the world. Key Worldwide executives tell Stewart Clarke how they will execute the roll out, and about their commissioning and acquisition needs

**T**he launch of three new international channel brands would ordinarily be a boon to distributors and, over time as the nets move to original programming, producers.

When the three brands are from BBC Worldwide, a distributor with a 50,000-hour catalogue, content owners might be tempted to curb their enthusiasm. However, while some landmark in-house titles will be

cornerstones of the BBC Brit, BBC Earth and BBC First schedules, the commercial arm of the UK public broadcaster is also reaching out to producers and sellers of finished programming.

BBCWW is already in original programming mode for the new channels, says chief content officer, Helen Jackson. "We want to do more commissioning around Brit and Earth and we're looking for content that will help define those channels," she says.

Before looking at the channels' specific needs (see box, page 72), content companies should be mindful of Worldwide's mission with its new trio of 'global genre brands'.

Since late last year, Jon Farrar has been working across the new channels as senior VP, global programming and acquisitions. Before taking that newly created post he played a key role in shaping the core channel propositions. "We asked ourselves, 'Where are we world class?', and there were three obvious





Mud, Sweat &amp; Gears

places," he says. "Top Gear and male-skewed fact-ent, which has evolved into Brit. Then there has been a huge renaissance in British drama – it always had a unique quality, but it is now at a different level in terms of investment – and that is on BBC First. And we are excited about our natural history programming and tentpoles and wanted to bring them to screen, so there is BBC Earth."

Brit and Earth's debuts were in Poland in February. Speaking at a press event ahead of



Life Stories

the Brit launch, BBCWW CEO Tim Davie said there was a niche for the channel. "There is a gap in the market for a male-skewing fact-ent destination," he said. "BBC Brit will capture the maverick spirit of our premium factual entertainment programmes."

Launch titles on Brit included Karl Pilkington show *Moaning of Life* and *Duck Quacks Don't Echo*. Earth's launch schedule included David Attenborough series *Life Story* (above, right), Brian Cox's *Human Universe* and Steve Backshall show *Deadly Pole to Pole*.

"The channels are on all of the key Polish platforms except [cable operator] Multimedia," says Grant Welland, who oversees Poland as Worldwide's executive VP for CEE, the Middle East and Africa (CEMA). "We simulcast *Top Gear* and it won a 5% share in the male 16-44 demo, and with Earth we beat Discovery Science in a couple of slots." Local commissions are an ambition, he adds.

The next wave of launches will be in the Nordics, starting this month. That will see Brit and Earth roll out as linear channels in Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Iceland, replacing the existing BBC Entertainment and BBC Knowledge channels and sitting alongside the BBC Lifestyle and BBC HD channels.

Drama service First is currently only on Foxtel in Australia and, given the premium nature of the scripted content, is likely to roll out internationally at a slower pace than its sister channels.

Ultimately, Farrar says, there will be regional Brit and Earth channel feeds in Africa, Asia and Latin America. "The brands will be based on global templates, but will become local and appeal to local audiences. There will be *Life Story* on Earth and *Top Gear* on Brit, but for the brand identities to grow we will need to look at the nuances of the local markets."

Accordingly, commissioned programming is in the works. Earth gets a strong pipeline of content from the BBC's vaunted Natural History Unit, meaning its high-end wildlife and natural history requirements are largely covered. That leaves room for fact-ent and human interest stories, such as those looking at people living in extreme conditions, which is one area the in-house commissioning teams want to explore.

Realistically, because of the NHU content, Earth will be a channel fuelled by in-house BBC fare. Brit is a male-skewed fact-ent channel and will be more of a 'mixed economy', the programming teams say. "We can't sit and wait for the BBC to make the shows that we need, [so] we need to take some control of what goes into the schedule," Farrar notes.

With Brit, however, there is a large *Top Gear*-shaped elephant in the room. Jeremy Clarkson's 'fracas' with one of the crew led to episodes from season twenty two of the motoring show being shelved, a full internal BBC investigation and, ultimately, the star presenter not having his (expiring) contract renewed. That has thrown, as TBI goes to press, the future of the show into doubt.

## BUYERS BRIEFING: TAKING BRIT ABROAD AND EXPANDING EARTH GLOBALLY

Julie Swanston is VP, commissioning for BBC Worldwide Channels. She will commission a minimum of 83 hours of content a year for Brit and Earth, with Liam Keelan, director of scripted, overseeing BBC First. For BBC Brit, she will commission four original, factual-entertainment series across four core key filters: camaraderie, expertise, wit and jeopardy.

For BBC Earth, and particularly the *Earth Unplugged* slot, Swanston wants "natural history with its hair down." Describing the editorial must-haves at a London conference late last year, she said: "We are looking for series that have a clear mission and sense of purpose for BBC Earth, the *Earth Unplugged* slot will be exhilarating, lean-forward television. Expertise is critical, but it must be matched by entertainment; they are of equal importance in the content we are seeking for BBC Earth."

BBC Earth falls under the remit of Mark Reynolds, the former commercial director for factual at Worldwide, who was made genre director for factual last year. The Earth commissioning team also includes Kirsty Hanson, who joined from Warner Bros. prodco Twenty Twenty earlier this year. She has a

particular focus on the *Earth Unplugged* slot with a remit to greenlight "adrenalin-fuelled, fast paced and visceral adventure series that have British talent at their centre".

Worldwide's director of factual entertainment and entertainment content, Tracy Forsyth, will also be instrumental in the decision-making.

"There will be about 40 hours a year for each, maybe more on Earth," she says. "We'll also do local commissions, as we did *Come Dine With Me South Africa*, which has run to three seasons [on the BBC Entertainment channel]."

For Earth, finding the next great presenting personality is a key quest. "We're always looking for the next adventure hero," Forsyth says, "Indiana Jones or Lara Croft figures who grew up with David Attenborough posters on their walls. We want new charismatic storytellers who are mission-focused, who don't stand back and observe; they get their hands dirty."

Brit is about hitting a core male 25-44 demo, but also being inclusive with traditional male topics covered in a way that does not alienate the female audience. "We're always looking for pop science and engineering and survival, but it is more about the tone [than the specific genre],"

I want Indiana Jones figures who grew up sticking Attenborough posters on their bedroom walls  
**Tracy Forsyth**



says Forsyth. "We want to see some cheekiness and mischievousness on screen, mixed with expertise."

Typically, first runs of commissioned series will run to six or, ideally, ten episodes. There are two commissioning summits a year in London, one in January and one before MIPCOM and would-be partners will ideally come to the table with some financing already in place, as Worldwide does not want to fully fund. BBC Worldwide channels Brit and BBC America coproduce *Mud, Sweat and Gears*, for example.

"We want to coproduce, so there should be a partner," says Forsyth. "If someone has a US or UK copro partner, we can take the rights for the rest of the world."

In addition to providing BBC Two in the UK with a headache, this presents Worldwide with a problem. After the incident, it had to provide alternative programming to a slew of international *Top Gear* broadcasters.

In terms of channels, it is a major issue as, in many senses, BBC Brit is an international *Top Gear* channel.

Its first original commission, motoring show *Mud, Sweat & Gears* was a *Top Gear* retention piece, designed to keep fans of Clarkson et al tuning in for another hour. In the series, British car journalists Tom 'Wookie' Ford and Jonny Smith head up two teams competing over 24 hours to reconstruct and modify cars and other vehicles.

*Top Gear* was also not only lined up as an exclusive centerpiece series on Brit, but also seen as setting the tone for the rest of the channel. All of the BBC executives spoke to TBI ahead of the Clarkson crisis, but the importance of his show to the Brit channel was clear. "Brit is male-skewed factual entertainment with *Top Gear* at the centre;

the rest of the schedule will be infused with the spirit that [*Top Gear*] has," Farrar said. "It will have shows across the full spread of male interests and in some markets there will be comedy and entertainment programming."

BBC Earth, meanwhile, is, about smart thinking. "It has to be relevant to our times; think New York times non-fiction top-ten and making clever cool," Farrar says. "Within specialist factual there is also a trend for looking at how we can live better lives, become healthier, happier versions of ourselves, and we will absolutely focus on that."

BBC First is Worldwide's premium drama offering and launched in Australia last August. Illustrating some of the windowing issues channel launches can create, the Foxtel roll-out meant that a first-look deal with the ABC was reworked to a second-look agreement, and that the Australian pubcaster now gets BBC content a year after it has been on the pay TV First service.

First's launch slate included *The Musketeers*, *Peaky Blinders*, *The Honourable Woman* and the

second season of *The Fall*, all of which went out on BBC channels in the UK, but which come from a variety of distributors.

"We have three areas of particular interest with First," Farrar says. "One is 'addictive drama' – serialised binge-viewing shows with a sense of moral ambiguity and driven by surprise." These kind of high-end scripted offerings also help pay TV players fight off competition from Netflix and its OTT brethren, helping the channel to get traction with operators. First is also hungry for crime content, often with a skew to older females, who are big drama watchers.

"We also want the opposite of those serialised standalone shows, with drama that has moral certainty, where good wins over evil and there is a sense of familiarity, like *Doctor Who*," Farrar says.

He adds: "We will acquire at MIP and MIPCOM and the important markets, but we want to have a rolling dialogue with third-party distributors and strengthen our relationships with them." **TBI**

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## 9<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL

# BUSAN CONTENTS MARKET

# 2015

May 7-9  
BEXCO, BUSAN, KOREA

ON-LINE REGISTRATION  
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**Wild Kratts Episodes** 92x22' - 26 new episodes coming soon **Genre** Animated Adventure Comedy **Synopsis** The Kratt brothers leap into animated action as they travel to different corners of the world to get up close with amazing new animals.



**Peg + Cat Episodes** 80x12' - 50 new episodes coming soon **Genre** Animated Preschool **Synopsis** Emmy® award winning series that follows Peg and her sidekick, Cat, as they embark on adventures while learning basic math concepts and skills.



**Get Ace Episodes** 52x11' minutes - 52 new episodes coming soon **Genre** Animated Comedy **Synopsis** Nerdy high schooler Ace McDougal, is catapulted into adventure when he's accidentally fitted with some cool, ultra high-tech, experimental braces.

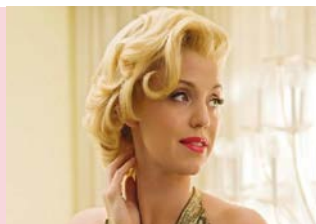


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**UnREAL Episodes** 10x60' **Genre** Scripted **Synopsis** A provocative drama that gives a fictitious behind-the-scenes look at the chaos behind a dating competition program.



**The Secret Life of Marilyn Monroe Episodes** 2x120' **Genre** Mini-Series **Synopsis** A deeply personal look at the life of film icon Marilyn Monroe, the complex and troubled star whose Hollywood career has become a legend.



**Sons of Liberty Episodes** 3x120' or 6x60' **Genre** Scripted **Synopsis** Rogues become rebels, rebels become heroes in this universal story of revolution and the fight for liberty.



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 Stand: R8.C20



**Real Love Live Episodes** 60' episodes **Genre** Entertainment/Format **Synopsis** Watch singletons find real love. Live. See every swipe, like, text and kiss as daters watch along live waiting to hear from you on social media.



**Safe House Episodes** 4x60' **Genre** Drama Series **Synopsis** Christopher Eccleston stars in this contemporary thriller set against the stunning backdrop of the Lake District, where dangerous secrets lie in wait.



**Kew on a Plate Episodes** 4x60' **Genre** Factual Entertainment **Synopsis** The world's most important centre for botanical expertise becomes the home of a brand new garden kitchen as Kate Humble and Michelin-starred Chef, Raymond Blanc, take over Kew Gardens.



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**Babushka Episodes** 60' **Genre** Prime Time Game Show **Synopsis** Thrilling new game show where contestants must open 8 giant babushka dolls to win \$500,000! Combining knowledge, strategy and pure luck, you'll never know what to expect!



**Yum Factor Episodes** 60' **Genre** Prime Time Competitive Cooking **Synopsis** An appetizing new twist on prime time cooking competitions that tests if 3 home cooks can really tell who likes their food. Every correct guess is worth money!



**I Can Do That! Episodes** 13x90' - 120' **Genre** Prime Time Entertainment **Synopsis** A groundbreaking primetime entertainment format that challenges celebrities to go head-to-head and perform new and impressive acts each week! Airing soon on NBC.



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**Stolen Life Episodes** ongoing x90'  
**Genre** Drama **Synopsis** An Istanbul Ghetto, full of slum houses, muddy roads and a poor neighbourhood... Asiye's only desire is to be released from this dead-end ghetto...



**Price of Love Episodes** ongoing x90'  
**Genre** Drama **Synopsis** A fight to death between two men who become enemies instead of being brothers for the love of a woman.



**Sila Episodes** 79 x90' **Genre** Drama  
**Synopsis** Set in the magical city of Mardin on the fruitful plains of Mesopotamia – a place of terraced buildings, shy windows and narrow lanes, where tradition challenges law and love challenges tradition.



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**Banished Episodes** 7x50' **Genre** Drama **Synopsis** A compelling, character-led drama from the Emmy award-winning writer, Jimmy McGovern (The Street, Cracker), based on the founding of Sydney.



**The Interceptor Episodes** 8x50'  
**Genre** Drama **Synopsis** Stylishly shot, fast-paced and pulsating with heart and humour, The Interceptor follows a top-secret law-enforcement team tasked with taking down society's most dangerous criminals.



**9 Months That Made You Episodes** 3x50' **Genre** Science **Synopsis** This series reveals how everything about the way you are, and what life has in store for you, had been decided before you were born.



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**Hockey Wives: Married to the Game Episodes** 8x60' **Genre** Factual **Synopsis** Hockey Wives follows the wives of professional ice hockey players across North America as they navigate the challenging lifestyles in this high stakes world.



**Game of Homes Episodes** 8x60'  
**Genre** Lifestyle **Synopsis** Four couples have just four weeks to transform derelict dumps into stunning show homes for the chance to win their home and a plot of land to put it on!



**Pati's Mexican Table Episodes** 26x30'  
**Genre** Lifestyle **Synopsis** Pati Jinich shares the tastes of her childhood, exploring the breadth of Mexican cooking and the creative possibilities of authentic ingredients.



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**The Big Feed Episodes** 13x30' HD & 4K **Genre** Nature & Wildlife **Synopsis** From giraffes and gorillas to penguins and pandas, this documentary takes you behind the enclosures, chronicling the challenges of feeding animals in the zoo.



**Cabin Truckers Episodes** 13x30' HD  
**Genre** Factual Entertainment **Synopsis** Follow the exploits of hauling colossal cabins to remote, picturesque locations. Watch as an expert team navigates through rocky, mountainous terrain.



**Paranormal Survivor Episodes** 10x60' HD **Genre** Factual Entertainment **Synopsis** Taking you through terrifying real-life encounters with the supernatural. Hear from those who've faced these feared spirits and watch dramatic recreations.



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**Wuzzle & Pip Episodes** 52x5' **Genre** Pre-school animation **Synopsis** Based on top selling pre-school books, top rated series Wuzzle & Pip follows the adventures of two loveable dogs.



**Wanda and the Alien Episodes** 52x10' **Genre** Pre-school animation **Synopsis** Based on the best-selling books, little rabbit Wanda and her new friend The Alien explore the wonders of both their worlds while learning about friendship and trust.



**So Awkward Episodes** 26x28' **Genre** Kids Live Action **Synopsis** A sitcom about three very clever but socially awkward 13 year old girls, trying to make sense of life, boys and fitting in!



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**Olympus Episodes** 13x60' **Genre** Drama Series **Synopsis** Using a stunning blend of CGI and live action, Olympus takes viewers on a thrilling adventure into the ancient world of humans, Gods and monsters, featuring characters from mythology.



**The Syndicate Season 3 Episodes** 6x60' **Genre** Drama Series **Synopsis** With Lord Hazelwood's health failing and debts of £6.5 million, the future of Hazlewood Manor is in jeopardy. But then the unthinkable happens... the staff wins the lottery!



**Mandela, My Dad and Me Episodes** 1x60' **Genre** Documentary **Synopsis** Golden Globe-winning actor Idris Elba goes on a journey of self-exploration as he prepares to release an album inspired by his time researching and portraying Nelson Mandela.



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**World's Funniest Fails Episodes** 18x60' **Genre** Non-fiction **Synopsis** Fun for the whole family. Each week a panel of three comedians analyze user generated HD videos to crown the "Fail of the Week."



**OKTV! Episodes** 260x30' **Genre** Non-fiction **Synopsis** In its 3rd season, OK! TV is available as a five-day a week strip focusing on pop culture, gossip, and celebrity lifestyle delivered by FTP.



**Fail Army Episodes** 40x30' **Genre** Non-fiction **Synopsis** Fail Army, the world-wide leader in HD blooper videos, returns. Each episode contains an average of 60 clips. No host, voice over based.



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**The Making of the Mob: New York (AMC) Episodes** 8x60' **Genre** Crime Douc-Drama Series **Synopsis** High-end, docu-drama chronicling the rise and fall of the world's most notorious mobsters, and the roots of organized crime.



**David Attenborough's Great Barrier Reef (BBC1, ABC Australia) Episodes** 3x60' + 1x60' behind the scenes **Genre** Natural History **Synopsis** Renowned naturalist David Attenborough explores and reveals never before seen secrets of The Great Barrier Reef.



**The Enfield Haunting (Sky Living) Episodes** 3x60' or 2x90' **Genre** Thriller Series **Synopsis** A chilling, three-part drama series inspired by the world's most documented poltergeist incident and the bizarre real events that took place at an "ordinary" house.





**web:** fremantlemedia.com  
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 Fremantlemedia International; Lisa Honig, SEVP Television & Digital Distribution North America; Jamie Lynn, EVP Sales and Distribution EMEA; Paul Ridley, SEVP Sales & Distribution Australia, New Zealand and Japan.

## THE SEVENTIES

**The Seventies Episodes** 8x60' **Genre** Factual **Synopsis** CNN returns with brand new series, The Seventies. Using rare and original footage, The Seventies examines the individuals and events that influenced and shaped a decade.



**Deutschland 83 Episodes** 8x60' **Genre** Drama **Synopsis** Martin Rauch, a 24 year-old East Germany native, is pulled from the only world he knows to work undercover as a spy in the West.



**Eye Candy Episodes** 10x60' **Genre** Drama **Synopsis** Tech genius Lindy starts online dating but suspects one of her mysterious suitors might be a deadly cyber-stalker.



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**Narcos - Netflix Episodes** 10x60' **Genre** Drama/Series **Synopsis** From Jose Padilha, comes an inside look at the men who would stop at nothing to take down Pablo Escobar and change the drug trade forever.



**Hemlock Grove - Netflix Episodes** 33x60' **Genre** Drama/Series **Synopsis** From acclaimed director Eli Roth, comes a groundbreaking series that forces us to ask what is the true nature of monsters, vampires and werewolves.

**< Hannibal - NBC, AXN Episodes** 39x60' **Genre** Drama/Series **Synopsis** Named one of the best shows on TV, Hannibal explores the riveting relationship between FBI criminal profiler Will Graham and serial killer Dr. Hannibal Lecter.



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**The Smurfs TV Series Episodes** 272x24' **Genre** Animated series **Synopsis** This children's series follows the adventures of the Smurfs, little blue-skinned creatures who live in a peaceful village and try to outwit the evil Gargamel.



**The Smurfs and the Magic Flute Episodes** 1x70' **Genre** Animated film **Synopsis** The Smurfs, the knight Johan and his companion Peewit try to take back the magic flute from the hands of the villain Oilycreep who uses it to rob people of their money.



**From the World of Peyo to Planet Smurf Episodes** 1x52' **Genre** Documentary **Synopsis** The film retraces the story of Peyo, the author and artist behind 'The Smurfs'. His work and characters are explored by his family, former colleagues and critics.



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**Texas Rising Episodes** 10x60' **Genre** Drama **Synopsis** Epic story of desperate men rising from the dust of Texas to take back their liberty. With an all-star cast, including Bill Paxton, Ray Liotta, Brendan Fraser and Jeffrey Dean Morgan.



**Aquarius Episodes** 13x60' **Genre** Drama **Synopsis** 1967 LA and a girl's disappearance draws two mismatched cops into the realm of a sinister cult. Starring David Duchovny, Aquarius is an edgy, compulsive and visually stunning new US drama.



**10,000 BC Episodes** 10x60' **Genre** Entertainment (Also available as a Format) **Synopsis** Twenty men and women from every conceivable walk of life in modern society give up everything to live in the wilderness as a Stone Age community.



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**Secret Wings "Pollen Princesses"** (Mondo TV & Blonde Pilot) **Episodes** 26x13' **Genre** Animation 2D Full HD **Synopsis** The story of the Pollen Princesses that live in the ocean world of Glimmer in a colourful archipelago.



**YooHoo & Friends** (Mondo TV & Aurora) **Episodes** 52x11' **Genre** Animation - 3D CGI Full HD **Synopsis** One day in peaceful Yootopia, garbage starts to fall from the sky. The garbage was space junk. At this rate, Yootopia will be a trash heap shortly...



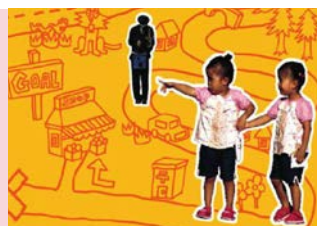
**Atomicon** (Mondo TV and Giochi Preziosi) **Episodes** 52x13' **Genre** Animation - 3D CGI HD **Synopsis** Beyond the centre of the Universe... is there something else? The Atoms, microscopic planets on which is held The biggest smallest battle of all time.



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**Breaking Ordinary** **Episodes** 10x30' **Genre** Format/Entertainment series **Synopsis** Breaking Ordinary is a docu-reality show that features real people who put their skills to the test to take ordinary products to create the extraordinary.



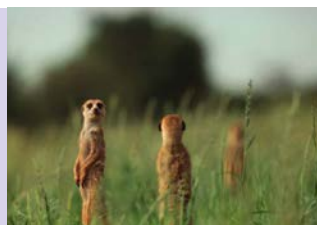
**Old Enough!** **Episodes** 11x60'-120' **Genre** Format/Entertainment series **Synopsis** Celebrating its 25th anniversary, this show makes a hit both in Japan and internationally, capturing the refreshing wonder of little children going on big adventures.



**Wife** **Episodes** 10x60' **Genre** Drama series **Synopsis** Her entire life is dedicated to appearing as the perfect housewife. Despite the seemingly perfect marriage, the couple's facade is too good to be true.



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**The Kalahari Meerkats** **Episodes** 12x30' **Genre** Wildlife **Synopsis** A look at a family of meerkats struggling to survive in Africa's Kalahari Desert. From territorial battles to love affairs, these cute animals rarely have a dull moment.



**The Fixer** **Episodes** 2x120' **Genre** Crime/Thriller **Synopsis** Suspicious of the "official answers" to an oilrig disaster, Ellie Molaro investigates the conspiracy of "Fixers" who are behind the worst disasters in the country.



**I Do, I Do, I Do** **Episodes** 1x120' **Genre** Romance **Synopsis** An architect relives her disastrous wedding day over and over until she begins to face her biggest fears and discovers what she really wants.



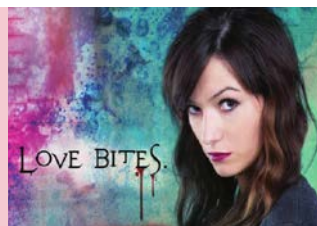
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**The Mobles** **Episodes** 30x11' **Genre** Live-action preschool **Synopsis** Featuring fun moves, memorable music and catchy lyrics, this series turns viewers into doers by getting them up and moving through playful participation.



**Life After Digital** **Episodes** 1x60' **Genre** Documentary **Synopsis** A startling look at the unintended consequences of our wired world, including cyberbullying, revenge porn, trolling and facial recognition technologies.



**Carmilla** **Episodes** 36x4' **Genre** Live-action young adult digital comedy **Synopsis** This mysterious comedy series tells the story of a university student whose world is turned upside down when a vampire moves into her dorm room.



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**Prized Apart** Primetime adventure game show. Ten contestants battle it out overseas in a series of physical and mental challenges to win a life changing prize. But in a twist, it will be their partners and loved ones back home who play a deciding role.



**Man V Fly** Entertainment format showing the epic battle between man and fly. In a padded cell, the player has one minute to kill the fly and win big prize money. Irreverent commentary including expert analysis from a legendary Pro Fly Swatting Champion.



**Win Your Wish List** A simple but highly addictive game show where couples answer questions against the clock in a bid to win six fabulous prizes and the ultimate star prize from their own specially compiled Wish List.



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**Wicked Inventions** Episodes 3x30'  
**Genre** History **Synopsis** What do duct tape and instant coffee have in common? Or GPS navigation and Kleenex tissues? Prepare to be surprised!



**What on Earth?** Episodes 6x60'  
**Genre** Science **Synopsis** A pop science series that asks the big questions from the Earth's orbit. By using satellite photography, can experts solve bizarre mysteries on the ground?



**Survivorman** Episodes 57x60' **Genre** Adventure **Synopsis** No food, no shelter, no fresh water, no tools... no camera crew. One man – alone in the wilderness. Join us as we follow filmmaker and survival expert Les Stroud.



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**Paprika** Episodes 78x7', 26x30' **Genre** Preschool **Synopsis** Stan and Oliver, with a little help from their friends, have a special knack for turning problems into solutions and even handicaps into strength!



**Zig & Sharko (Season 2)** Episodes 15x67', 52x30' **Genre** Slapstick Comedy **Synopsis** A desert island, a starving hyena and one obsession: eat the mermaid! She sets up house on the beach! Problem: so has her bodyguard, the shark! Ouch!



**A Kind of Magic (Season 2)** Episodes 52x30' **Genre** Comedy **Synopsis** A family of Fairytale characters emigrate from Fairyland and settle in the Real world. Boy are they unprepared! Not so easy to deal with a world where a happy ending is never guaranteed...

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# LAST WORD



BO STEHMEIER

## The Toys 'R' US of TV

**S**o what's up with TV? Depressed viewing figures (which are not helped by a promiscuous primetime audience), an advertising market that fights over diminishing consumer attention rather than disposable income, a proliferation of screens in modern households and fewer staff at the channels, who not only manage the main feed, but now have to manage the new special interest DTT sister channels.

The cost to launch these new emerging channels is plummeting, meaning there is more linear competition. 4K is the new HD and 'scripted bingeing' is the new black.

Sound complicated? It doesn't have to be.

As the direct-to-consumer content market is rapidly changing, so are we as distributors.

Offering content these days, especially non-primetime programming, is about adjusting and adding value for the executives overseeing the networks and platforms.

Having great content is still definitely a door opener, but in order to build a scalable business, you have to be in the position to offer a returnable business with true expertise across a specific genre, or an audience that you have truly captured.

DistributionPlus is our strategic move to

Being a one-stop shop for everyone's factual needs means that we can engage with any territory at all levels. That gives the buyer a unique interface within the factual genre

offer just that.

To date we have offered production, co-finance and conventional distribution services; but now, we have grown those services to include channel launches, scheduling assistance, branded-block placements, dubbing solutions and even channel acquisitions and exploitation.

Being the one-stop solution for everyone's factual needs means that we can engage with any territory at all levels.

Not only does that give the buyer a unique, holistic interface within the factual genre, but they are also in a position to feel confident that they are dealing with real experts that can give them the solution they're after.

When meeting with direct-to-consumer content companies, we are in a position to offer them access to the best production talent and the ability to co-finance projects.

In the same breath we can also offer a

tailored service giving them full access to primetime or daytime solutions, including language versioning and packaging.

We don't stop there; we also help to launch new digital networks in the region, be it through building them from scratch or helping licence new ones for the platform.

Being solution driven has meant that through DistributionPlus, we are now the main facilitators and content providers to over twelve new factual and lifestyle channels that have launched in the last 18 months.

Offering DistributionPlus truly does make us the 'Toys 'R' Us' for non-scripted buyers.

The added value from an exploitation point of view is that these services cover the lifespan and value chain of the long tail and it means that we are able to look at content that has previously been unpopular and see its potential for added value. For example, daytime TV has always been notoriously under-loved by distributors; but we are now actively in the market looking for branded daytime content that specifically drives audiences to online retailers.

Thanks to technology we are now in a position to offer fixed feeds the finished programme, and branded block services that they have never received before, something we will be exploring these further at MIPTV this year. **TBI**

**There is more linear competition. 4k is the new HD and 'scripted bingeing' is the new black. Sound complicated? It doesn't have to be... As the direct to consumer content market is changing, so are distributors**

theguardian

# EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL TELEVISION FESTIVAL

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DAVID NEVINS, PRESIDENT, SHOWTIME ENTERTAINMENT

JOHN LANDGRAF, CEO, FX NETWORKS

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