

TBI Television Business International

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BLINK...**

**DON'T
LOOK
BACK...**

**DON'T LOSE
YOUR GRIP...**

**DON'T PLAY
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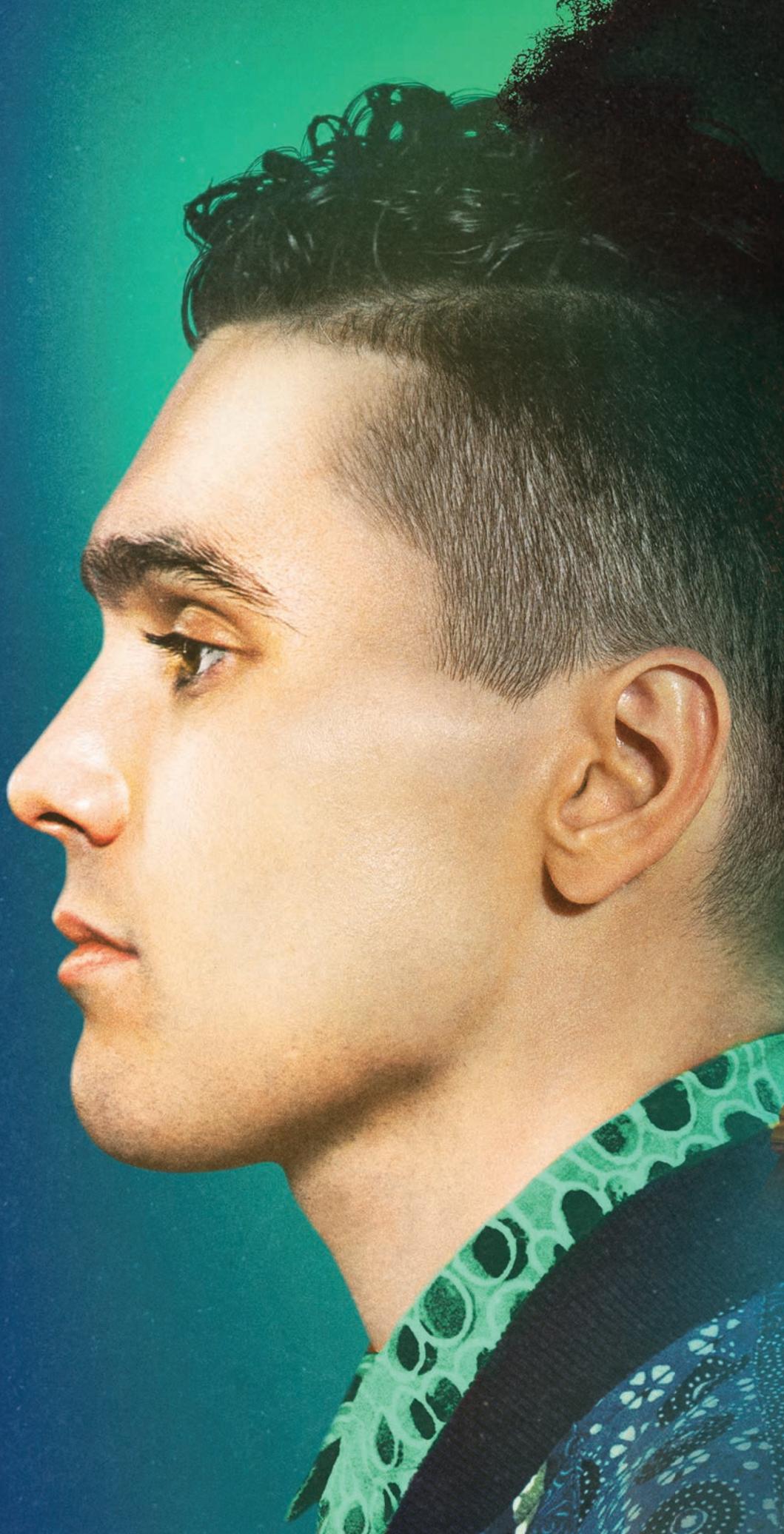
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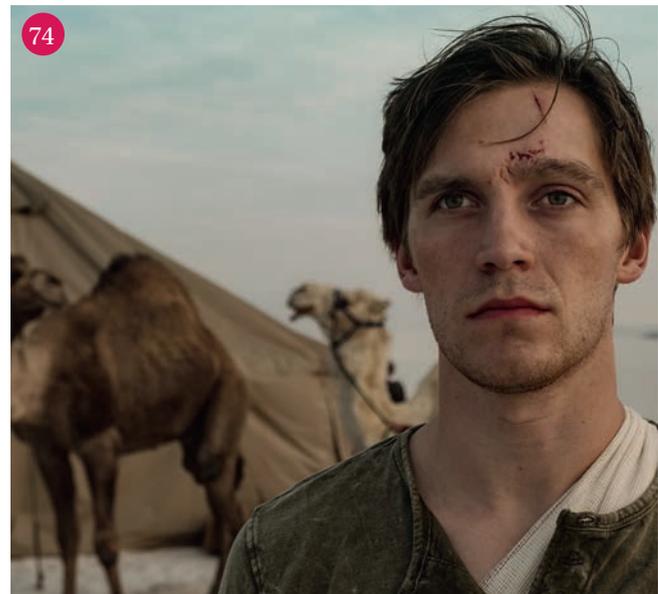
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Editor's note Manori Ravindran

Crazy cash

These days, there is some crazy cash flying around. Not necessarily for *Crown*-esque global originals, either, but rather multi-cam sitcoms such as *Friends* and *The Big Bang Theory*, with streamers forking out head-spinning sums to bulk up their forthcoming offerings. In fact, a number of them are set to descend on Cannes, which tells you all you need to know about the thriving international market.

Within the pages of our bumper MIPCOM issue, you'll find – in some shape or form – truly everything you need to know about this rapidly changing landscape and how players from all levels are adjusting to it.

As ever, distributors are at the sharp end of this disruption, as reflected in our 2019 Distributors Survey, which is newly broken out into scripted, unscripted, formats and kids. Sales outfits from around the world remind us exactly how many hats they wear and give us a flavour of the robust business in their respective markets.

Elsewhere, Amazon's James Farrell lifts the lid on his strategy for international originals, while Starz's Superna Kalle details the cable channel's market-leading SVOD Starzplay and its global expansion. Meanwhile, *Beverly Hills 90210* creator Darren Star gushes about his love letter to Paris, Sally Wainwright gets candid about being in control and Andrew Davies defends "sexing up" Jane Austen. Yep, things got real.

We also see the return of One to One, in which Facebook and Barcroft Studios give each other a grilling, as well as a spirited roundtable on how format masterminds are working with Netflix, Quibi and Amazon.

A piece you don't want to miss is our mental health roundtable – a solutions-oriented discussion in which mental wellness campaigners such as The Film & TV Charity's Alex Pumfrey and the BBC's Emma Loach talk practical steps to making this business sustainable for everyone. There is, quite simply, nothing more important than looking after yourself and one another in our brilliant but stressful industry.

Finally, thank you to our tireless art director Matt Humberstone for his amazing work on this mega-issue and hats off to sales manager Mike Callan and marketing whiz Abigail Dede on pulling off another fantastic edition of TBI's Content Innovation Awards in Cannes

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Well-being Tracy Forsyth

How to survive MIPCOM

In this month's Well-being column, former BBC Studios exec and corporate wellness coach Tracy Forsyth shares her must-dos for self-care in Cannes.

Ah, the annual global TV market MIPCOM. For those who don't work in TV, the picture it can summon is one of TV execs strolling on the Croisette in the gorgeous Cannes sunshine, laughing at star-studded cocktail parties and shaking hands on a multimillion dollar deal before a seafood and champagne lunch on the company yacht. However, for most delegates, MIPCOM is a feat of endurance that can deplete your mind, body and soul and leave you a husk of a human by the time it's all over.

Breakfast meetings start at 8.30am and then pitching, buying and selling goes on in back-to-back 30-minute batches right through 6pm. Then it's a drinks pitch, client dinner, the industry parties and networking until 2.30am. If you are Animal from *The Muppets* then this probably energises you. For everybody else, here is my simple survival guide.

Focus

There's a concept in yoga called Brahmacharya that was traditionally translated as sexual restraint. The principle suggests you channel sexual energy into the practice of yoga, not hedonism. Now I'm not going to get into the myth of MIP Husbands and Wives – that is not my business (although if it's true I wholeheartedly disapprove). These days Brahmacharya has lost its sexual connotation and is taken to mean using your energy in the right way.

At MIPCOM, there are a huge amount of distractions and energy sappers. You have to be 'on' from the moment you turn up at the airport because there are 100 people in the industry also on the same plane that you could talk to. It's fun – but draining. So, focus your energy on what needs doing, who needs seeing, landing what message you need to land and prioritise that.

Breathe

Secondly, take at least two minutes every hour to breathe deeply and fully. When you are waiting for

your next client, spend that time consciously breathing deeply. In and out. In and out. Or when you are walking from the Croisette to the Bunker, breathe in for four steps and out for four steps. Do it whenever you can. Breathing deeply refreshes us and brings more oxygen into our bloodstream, in turn energising us. It also helps calm down the nervous system and destresses us. All that fresh oxygen to the brain will even help you perform better.

Stretch

Between spending three-plus hours a day on our smartphones and 12 hours at a desk doing deals and meetings, it's no wonder we end up hunched over with a sore shoulders and neck, feeling like a crumpled-up tissue by the end of each day. Stand up and stretch as much as you possibly can. If it's difficult to do this in a room full of serious meetings, then go to the restroom and stretch in there. Full-body stretch, raise arms over the head, lean side to side. Fold over from your hips, knees bent (though avoid head below heart if you have high blood pressure). Do some twists from side to side. In yoga, twists are said to massage your internal organs and bring new 'prana' or energy to them. For a real luxury, book yourself in for a post-MIPCOM massage when you get back home and a restorative yoga class.

Hydrate

Finally, remember to hydrate. I love a rum cocktail. And a glass of prosecco. But when you add those to six coffees in the morning and four cups of tea in the afternoon, it's no wonder you start to feel a bit jaded and wan.

There is pressure to drink at MIPCOM because many a time you are entertaining clients or out at a party. But sustained drinking and caffeine intake over three to four days will have you feeling rotten. So hydrate as much as humanly possible: drink herbal teas, water, hot water with lemon, water with cucumber. Just drink your H2O.

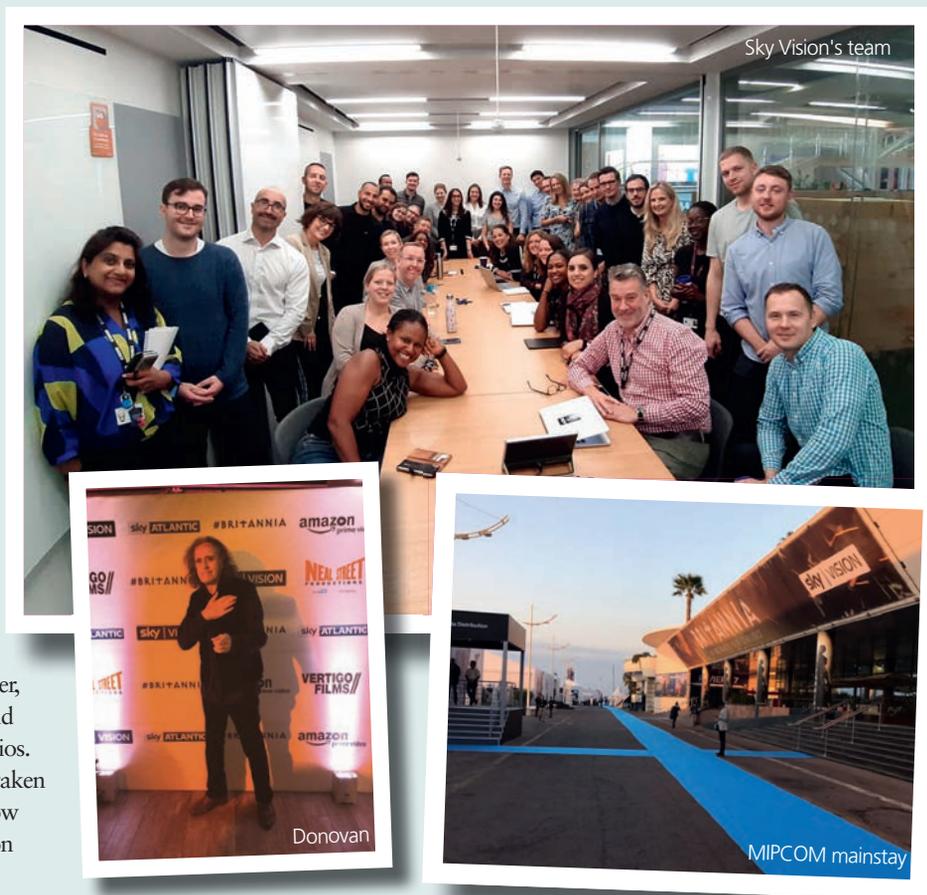
Good luck! **TBI**

Tracy is a creative mentor for the Channel 4 Indie Growth Fund, the producer of the WFTV mentoring scheme and a professional executive coach. Follow her at walterwootze.com

About Town

End of an era

There will be a Sky Vision-shaped hole in people's hearts at this year's MIPCOM. The seven-year-old distributor formally shut its doors on 1 October, following Comcast's takeover of parent company Sky earlier this year. Perched along Riviera 7 with a seaside view, the *Riviera* distributor – which hit its £200m (\$247m) revenue target two years ahead of schedule – was a mainstay at MIP with innovative displays, reliable rooftop drinks, some of the best talent in town (Donovan, the 'Hurdy Gurdy Man' himself, DJ'd at the *Britannia* party – need we say any more?) and an all-round lovely team. At a final drinks event in London in September, MD Jane Millichip thanked her team and promised "new beginnings" at Sky Studios. NBCUniversal Global Distribution has taken over the catalogue, while Sky Studios now handles its deficit funding and production interests. You'll be missed, Sky Vision.



Oslo diaries

TBI had exclusive coverage of last month's Showrunner Summit in Norway, organised by Katrina Wood's MediaXchange. *Homeland* co-creator Howard Gordon (left), whose credits also include Fox's *24*, didn't mince words when it came to the streamers. "The way we write TV is affected by how we watch it, or whatever we call that now. We all consume and binge. Even the idea of bingeing is a disgusting term – who wants to eat a meal and binge it?" Fair.



Smoke show



This time three years ago, *Fleabag* had just debuted on BBC Three. Now Amazon is applying, ahem, gentle pressure on wunderkid Phoebe Waller-Bridge for season three

Swings and Roundabouts

7.9m Fox's *Masked Singer* returned with 7.9m total viewers, and an Elizabethan leopard that'll probably turn out to be Shawn Mendes

3 Voice creator John de Mol opted out of extending his ITV earn-out for another three years. Voice of reason?

2 Oprah Winfrey revealed her book club for Apple TV+ will air every two months. We need more Oprah in our lives

\$600m HBO Max paid a heart-stopping sum to secure exclusive streaming rights for... *The Big Bang Theory*





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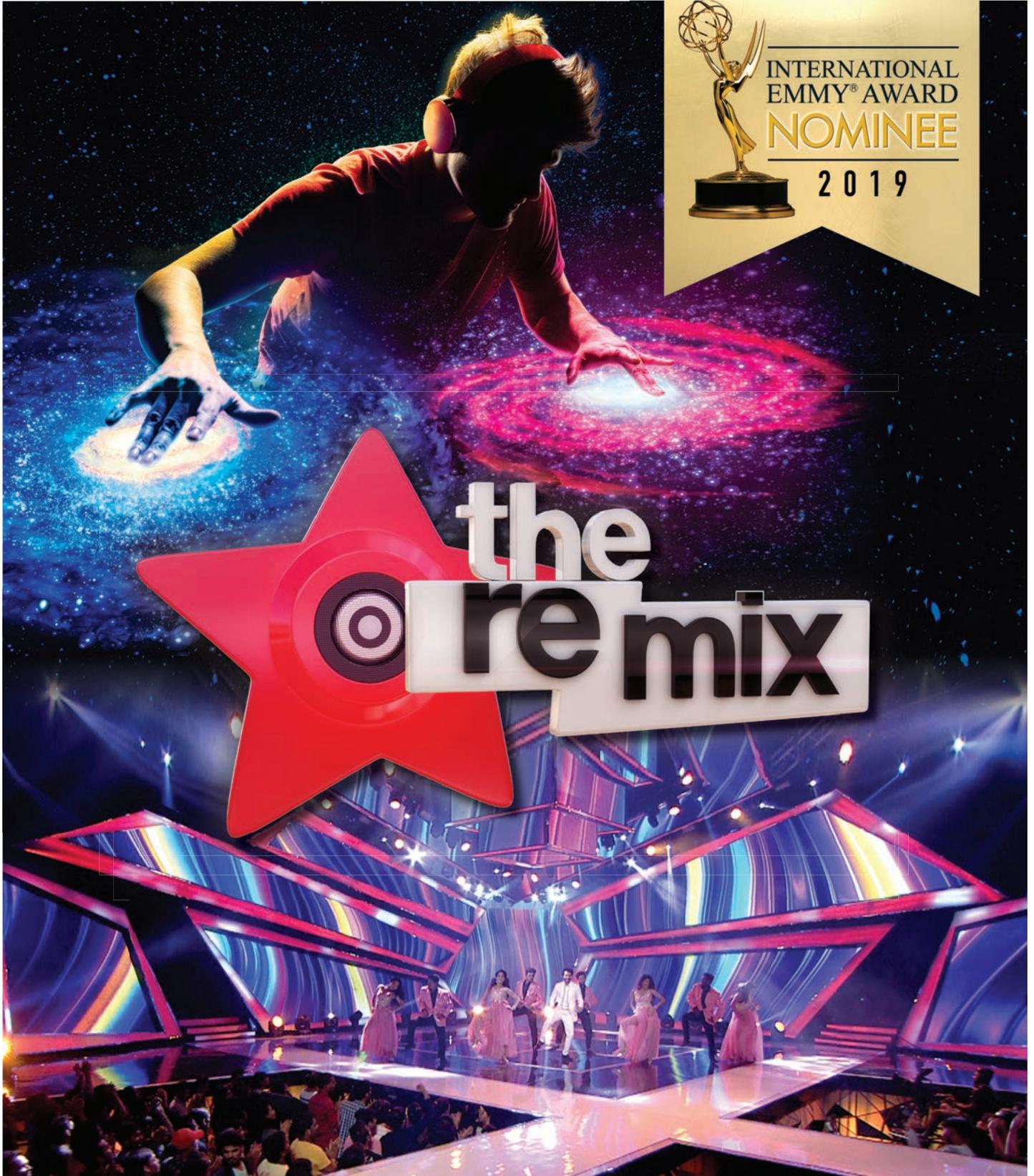


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Amazon Prime Video's global playbook

Amazon might be an SVOD of sorts but its evolution reflects a rapidly changing sector poised for new entrants. Head of international originals James Farrell tells Richard Middleton what's in the works



A flurry of SVOD services are set to join the market over the coming months but none look anything quite like Amazon Prime Video.

Bolted onto the side of the world's largest retailer, it has always occupied a unique position within the streaming landscape, regularly mentioned alongside competitors such as Netflix but, in truth, quite a different business.

It is not just the nature of the company behind it that makes Prime Video stand out from an increasingly large crowd: the company has for some time embraced more flexible rights models; it seems happy enough for shows to only work in one territory; and it has the luxury of knowing that the company's core business isn't directly built on the success or failure of its programming. All three differentiators, of course, are probably linked to the fact that it is Amazon-backed.

None of that is to say the retail giant's boss Jeff Bezos would be too happy if the \$1.7bn spent on content in the first quarter of 2019 had gone to waste though, of course. But it does mean there is a marked difference in how the company approaches content, as well as those who produce and distribute it – something that seems to be increasing as the SVOD evolves.

"We are very lucky to be part of the Prime ecosystem," admits head of international originals James Farrell, the former Sony Pictures Entertainment distribution exec who is a year into the job. "It is not a volume game here – we are not a service where you just need to watch a ton of shows each month."

Farrell is supremely adept at side-stepping any mention of his SVOD rivals by name but he is clear about where the differences lie between Prime Video and both incumbents – such as Netflix – and the soon-

Mirzapur is among Amazon's fast-growing Indian slate

to-launch triumvirate of Apple TV, Disney+ and HBO Max.

“Everybody is running very different businesses,” he says. “If I ran an AVOD I would be looking for very different content to what we are looking at, which is quality – and that is priority one.

“If I was in the volume game and had to program a broadcaster with four hours of primetime, or if I worked on a standalone SVOD that needed to get you to watch 50 hours a month, the way I program would be very different. So it’s not too helpful to see what other folks are doing.”

It helps Farrell’s case that Amazon is by and large doing things quite differently from its rivals. The exec readily concedes that he uses the word “distinctive” regularly, but that is core to the streamer’s proposition, he adds, and the priority for a local original is for it to work in the market where it is commissioned.

“The shows and films we want to make in France, for example, are our best chance to reach out to our French customers – it lets them know we have content on the service for them. So it is super important that the content works in France for French customers, Germany for German customers and the like,” he says, with series such as techno drama *Beat* available in the latter.

“Our mandate in India for example, as well as elsewhere, is making shows that have to be distinctive. So even if a customer only watches a couple of series or films each month, they come out thinking, I can’t wait to watch Amazon’s show next month,” he explains.

The Indian example is an intriguing one: a market of a billion people where Prime – providing free shipping alongside Prime Video – has been available for more than three years. It is now fast becoming a battleground for global streaming companies and Amazon is fighting hard.

“Our volume in India is higher mainly because that is what customers there want,” he explains, with shows such as *Made In Heaven* and *Inside Edge* on the originals slate. “Some other countries might love US content for example so our need to produce isn’t as great – we still produce content in Canada and Australia but the customers are pretty happy with blockbusters coming out of the US for example or from the UK.”

India is different though and Farrell says around 12 originals are on the slate at present, including shows such as *Mirzapur*. “That’s a good number. It’s one a month and any more than that can start to seem cluttered. One of the reasons why so much talent really likes working with us is because they know they will get all of our marketing push for that entire month,” he says, highlighting a regular bone of contention for

producers of shows for other global streamers.

“Their show isn’t going to be lost in the shop or buried behind other things, we are all in on those 12 programmes and that is pretty exciting for talent. They want their shows to stand out.”

The ‘glocal’ programming trend can also be a handy boon for Amazon, as Farrell admits. “It’s been something of a pleasant bonus that if you make a show really distinctive – whether that’s *Made In Heaven*, which you start off thinking would be great for Indian viewers, or *The Marvellous Mrs Maisel* for people in the US – and if they are well-written with great characters they can have that global reach.” Others, such as German drama franchise *Deutschland 83*, *86* and *89*, have fared better abroad than domestically.

Farrell adds that *Made In Heaven* has worked “incredibly well around the world” and he believes recent release *Family Man*, also from India, will perform equally well. Indian originals could grow further because of regional language differences, Farrell adds, but the exec’s global remit means he must balance output. It also means he has a rarely surpassed oversight of programming trends internationally.

“Spanish shows are super high quality,” he says, highlighting series such as *El Cid*, *La Templanza* and *Un Asunto Privado* as forthcoming series that he expects to engage, though that is perhaps underplaying it.

“They will be monster hits,” Farrell enthuses, “and our Sergio Ramos show [*El Corazon de Sergio Ramos*] is doing great, too, we are super bullish on those series.” He has similar hopes for the company’s slate in Brazil.

“We’ve spent a lot of time in Brazil recently – Prime just launched there – and we are really well positioned with some great content coming out over the next 12 months,” Farrell continues. But the market is a good example of the challenges facing global streamers as they look to establish themselves against muscular local players – in this case, companies such as long-established giant Globo and more recent entrants such as YouTube.

Farrell argues that the “very distinctive” Brazilian line-up can cut through, however. “If you’re a younger viewer and watch a lot of YouTube you probably still like great drama and comedy but the problem is no one is making it. It doesn’t work on broadcast and more local stories don’t necessarily work for the other global platforms.

“The shows and films we want to make in France are our best chance to reach out to our French customers – it tells them we have content on the service for them and that is super important.”

James Farrell originally joined Amazon from Sony Pictures Entertainment



OUR WORLD IN PERSPECTIVE



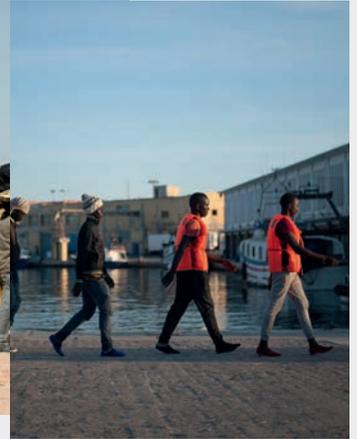
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“If we can execute super high-quality, well-written and funny shows – and not just scripted but unscripted too – then it will be very distinctive and interesting to those customers.”

Few shows have been unveiled as yet but one key title is *Tudo Ou Nada: Seleção Brasileira*, a study into the daily lives of the Brazilian national football team, which won the Copa America in 2019. The series is due to launch in 2020 and is an indicator of Prime Video’s fast-expanding unscripted strategy and an insight into how it uses formats.

On the former, Farrell says that to date, unscripted shows “in pretty much every country” has worked for the streamer. But there is a caveat.

“The types of shows that work in different countries are very different, so for example in Japan one of our top shows is *The Bachelor* format from Warner Bros. It does fantastically well. We’ve already commissioned *The Bachelorette* for next year there as well and that franchise will continue for a long time. In some countries, we wouldn’t make that show but it was so different to what was out there.”

Plans for European formats are also in the works but Farrell is keeping details close to his chest for now. He is more open about his wider format strategy, which can operate on both a country-by-country basis and as part of a global play.

“We are very open to formats – the key is it needs to be distinctive,” he says, noting again his use of the word. “In Japan, nobody really makes the big local formats – there isn’t *The Voice* or *MasterChef* so the

format space was wide open.

“Then when we looked at what the Japanese companies were making for themselves, they were doing some things really well – a lot more male-skewing stuff like *Wipeout*. We said if we are going to import a format then we want something that nobody else is doing, with a female angle for example, which is why we went after *The Bachelor*.

“It is similar elsewhere in the world – if *The Voice* or *Idol* had worked in France, for example, it wouldn’t be a case of us then looking to do *Got Talent*. We wouldn’t do the same thing, it’s not distinctive. We look for the white space.”

Then there’s *Tudo Ou Nada: Seleção Brasileira*. Although it was the first original show to be ordered by Prime Video in Brazil, the format was not new. The company had already made a UK version, focused on Premier League football side Manchester City and a US series about American Football sides including the Arizona Cardinals, while a show about New Zealand’s national rugby team the All Blacks debuted last year.

“We’ve also got our *LOL (Last One Laughing)* competition show too,” Farrell adds. The Mexican version has already become a hit and Rebel Wilson was recently secured to front an Australian version, to be produced by Endemol Shine Australia. “It’s not just a case-by-case basis,” Farrell highlights, “we can roll out and do formats over and over.”

Which brings us neatly onto rights, which applies to both unscripted and scripted. “There is a spectrum where on the one hand we fully-finance - we pay

Deutschland 86 debuted in 2018 following *Deutschland 83* in 2015



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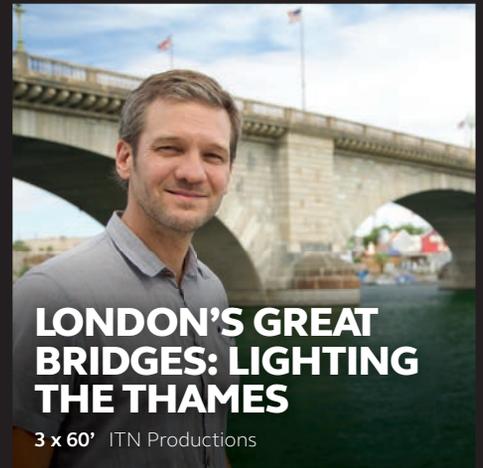
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Family Man (top) and El Corazon De Sergio Ramos reflect Prime Video's eclectic slate

everything and take worldwide rights, and that is great in a lot of cases.

“At the other end of the spectrum, we have licensing deals where we could be the second or third window. We’ll negotiate a fee to come in later but then we don’t have the creative involvement. And then there is the stuff in between, co-productions where territories and windows are split. And we are happy at either end of the spectrum or in the middle.”

Scroll through the order slate for Prime Video and examples do indeed dot the spectrum. Last month, Amazon Prime Video France scored first-window SVOD rights to thriller *The Inside Game* from Newen Distribution, and a month before that the streamer picked up global rights to *Súbete A Mi Moto*, about 1970s Puerto Rican band Menudo. But it has also co-produced with partners such as the BBC, with recent launches including *Good Omens*, which launched in May.

Just how this non-binary approach to producing will fare as new SVODs enter the market is unclear, but

Farrell is adamant that the focus is purely on Amazon. But what does he make of the mega deals that will see shows such as *Friends* moving to HBO Max and *Seinfeld* – which has been available on Prime Video in numerous countries including the UK – moving to Netflix in what is believed to be a deal worth north of \$500m?

“I read the headlines on those things but I look at what is working for us. I assume that those folks are looking at what is working for them and if they are going to pay all that money then it must mean that those shows will perform.

“Library content does work for us, a lot of people watch a lot of hours of it, people don’t just watch the newest thing – they watch those shows as comfort food on the weekend and when they get home late. I get it.”

And while Farrell works in originals – not licensing – he suggests there is a balance to be found. “If they think that a show is exactly what customers want to see then [our licensing teams] will fight for that show. But if they think that actually instead of spending that money on one show there are 10 other shows that could be acquired for the same price – and if we think customers will spend more hours watching those 10 shows – then we’ll get those 10. Our licensing guys are a smart group, they wouldn’t do something irrational.”

But there is clearly a rush for talent that Prime Video is by no means immune to, highlighted by Amazon Studios’ recent deal with *Fleabag* creator Phoebe Waller-Bridge. Farrell’s US colleagues are also behind the much-discussed *Lord Of The Rings* reboot, rights for which came in at around \$250m: so given that US rights to *Friends* are now going for around double that, does he think such a deal that will deliver original IP globally looks like good value?

“I’m not on that team but all the signs are it is going super well. I don’t think anybody is saying we shouldn’t have done that.

“Amazon is a great company because as soon as you know what customers want, it is very supportive and will say, ‘let’s do more of that’. If something like *Lord Of The Rings* is a big hit and if customers love it as we dive deeper into some of that classic [IP], I’m sure my colleagues from the US will find more of those things to do. And if *The Bachelor* in Japan works then we’ll do more there, and there will be more formats in Europe,” he says, before again referring to Prime Video’s model as the key differentiator.

“There are some great companies entering and some great content on the way, they will do very well. But they have very different business models, different content and some are local versus global. They’re all very different to us.” **TBI**



TBI Distributor's Survey 2019

As the content business prepares for an SVOD onslaught over the next six months, distributors are again at the sharp end of disruption. Here, Richard Middleton reports back on our extensive international survey that reveals the major challenges facing the sector and an array of opportunities that have already started to emerge

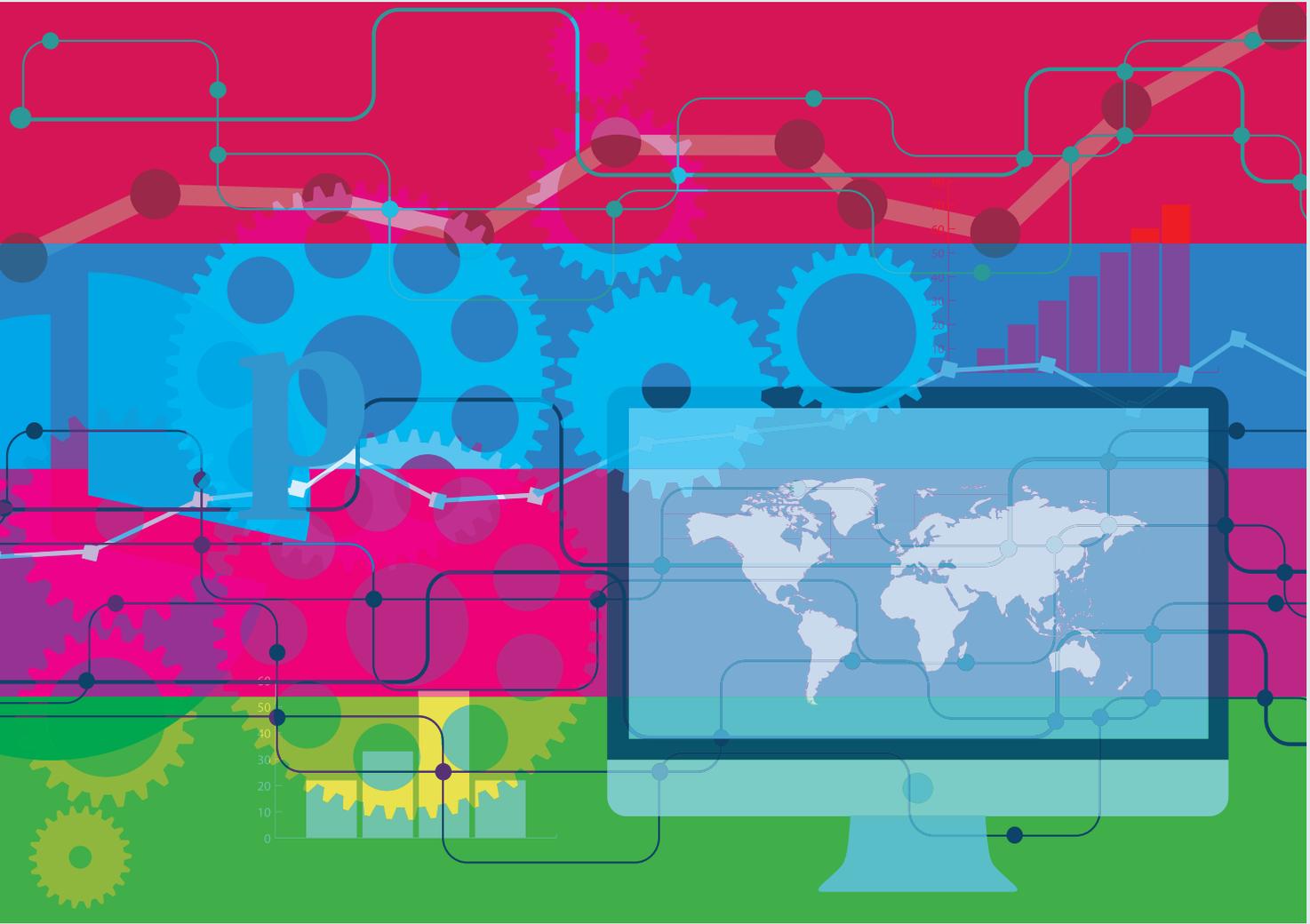
Distribution of TV content has transformed over the past five years but certain genres have felt some of these changes more keenly than others.

As such, this year's survey is broken down into four genres to reflect how different parts of the distribution business are changing and adapting to an increasingly diverse array of market forces.

The experiences of those working primarily in scripted, for example, can be considerably different to those distributing kids programming or unscripted

product. Take the issue of marketing; almost 70% of respondents operating in drama and comedy said their involvement in that part of the process had increased over the past 12 months. Compare that to unscripted, where 60% of respondents said their involvement in marketing had remained the same.

The ongoing demand for scripted product was also in evidence again, with 27% of respondents working in the sector reporting that SVOD budgets had increased by more than 25% over the past year and a further 18% saying they had increased by at least 10%.



While the experiences of those operating in different parts of the distribution business do differ, there were similarities as well. Most notably, Central and Eastern Europe has become a hotspot for sales companies across the board. Over half of distributors working in unscripted programming and formats said this region was one of the fastest growing, while it was cited by 43% of kids-focused companies.

Over the following pages, we delve deeper into the findings and explore the challenges and opportunities facing each part of the distribution business.

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The drama of distribution

Distribution has arguably never been as dynamic or responsive to the wider TV ecosystem as it is now, with companies becoming financiers, marketers, match-makers and even commissioners. Here we explore how the scripted side of the business is changing

The scripted side of the distribution business has to date been the most affected by the ongoing impact of SVOD outfits and their content strategies.

Budgets have surged and distributors have had to adapt quickly to a market in which they are no longer simply seen as companies that sell product but as financiers and match-makers that provide a vital role in filling increasing deficits and getting shows off the ground and into production.

Market consolidation is a given for many in this part of the business, which will bring with it further complications, but there are also more buyers. There is also more product, however, requiring distributors to increase their promotional spends to cut through.

Intense competition

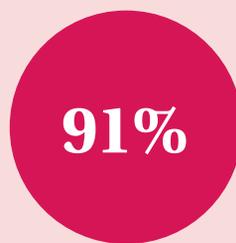
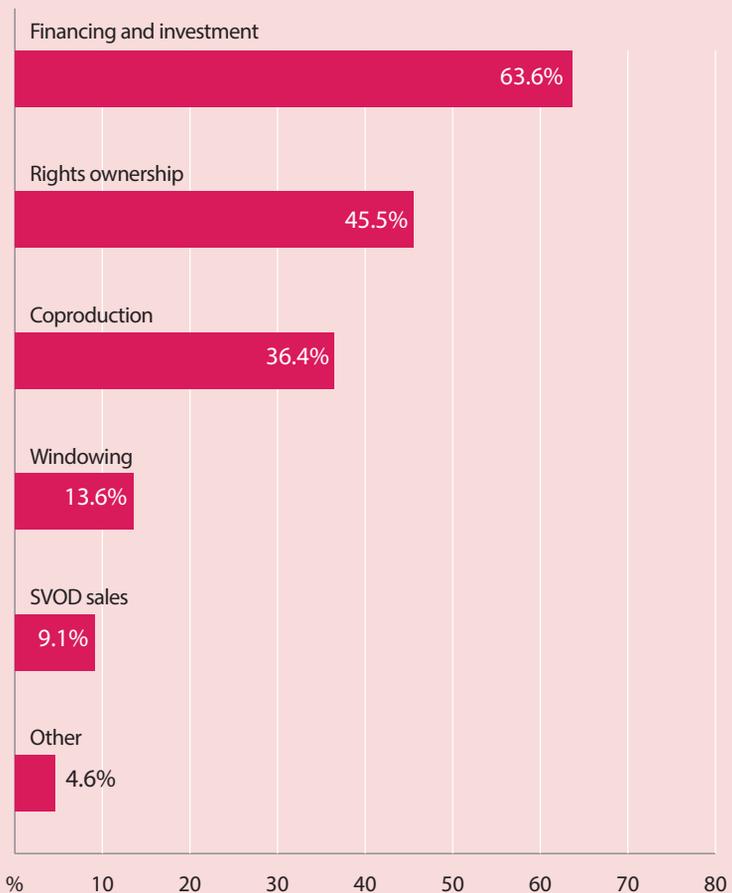
It is a point that was highlighted by Chris Bonney, CEO of rights at Cineflix Media. “As we ramp up our scripted output in particular, we have increased our promotion of content both at existing markets – through advertising, screenings and activations – but we have also increased our presence at the pre-MIPTV London Screening events, with exclusive preview screenings of new series as well as with our regular social event for buyers,” he says.

“We are also investing more into marketing materials such as EPKs (electronic press kits) with exclusive content for social media, for example. We are delivering more creatively led launch campaigns and ensuring our branded campaigns are distinctive and stand out in a crowded market.”

Indeed, if there is one takeout from this survey regarding scripted distribution, it is the intense competition companies are facing. Ensuring a pipeline of content is proving tough: 64% of respondents said competition to secure scripted shows has never been greater, with another 23% reporting that competition has increased albeit not to historic highs.

“We are increasing our efforts to source exciting new scripted source material,” says Greg Phillips, president of distribution at Kew Media,

Which of the following issues are most pressing to your business?



expect more market consolidation in 2019

“approaching creators, developers and producers as early as possible in order to secure the strongest IP.”

That point is echoed in the fact that more than 80% of respondents said they are now looking to get involved in series earlier and there appears to be an increasing tendency for distributors to take a far more active role in the creation of shows, too.

Just under a quarter of respondents said they always got involved in the creative process of a project, providing notes, guiding editorial and working with writers, but a further 72% said they

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either often or sometimes became involved now. Only 5% said they never got involved in creative.

While competition for product has increased, so have the outlets for distribution. Over the past 12 months, almost 20% of respondents said the number of buyers had increased by 20%, while more than 45% said they had seen buyer numbers increase by more than 10%. And while streamers might receive the most column inches for their impact on the drama market, almost all the distributors involved in this survey said they dealt with every type of client: from free TV networks and public service broadcasters, to thematic DTT networks, pay TV channels and free VOD services.

Budgetary requirements

However the budgets of those clients have not kept pace with each other. Respondents had mixed opinions on the spending power of SVOD buyers: 27% said

SVOD budgets had increased by more than 25% over the past 12 months; 18% said they had increased by more than 10%; and 23% said budgets had remained static. And yet, almost a quarter of respondents said SVOD budgets had decreased over the past year by more than 10%.

Meanwhile, the surging interest in AVOD was keenly highlighted, with no respondents reporting that budgets from this part of the market had decreased over the past 12 months. Almost half said budgets had remained the same, while just over 20% said they had risen by more than 10% and more than 30% of respondents said budgets had increased by more than 25%.

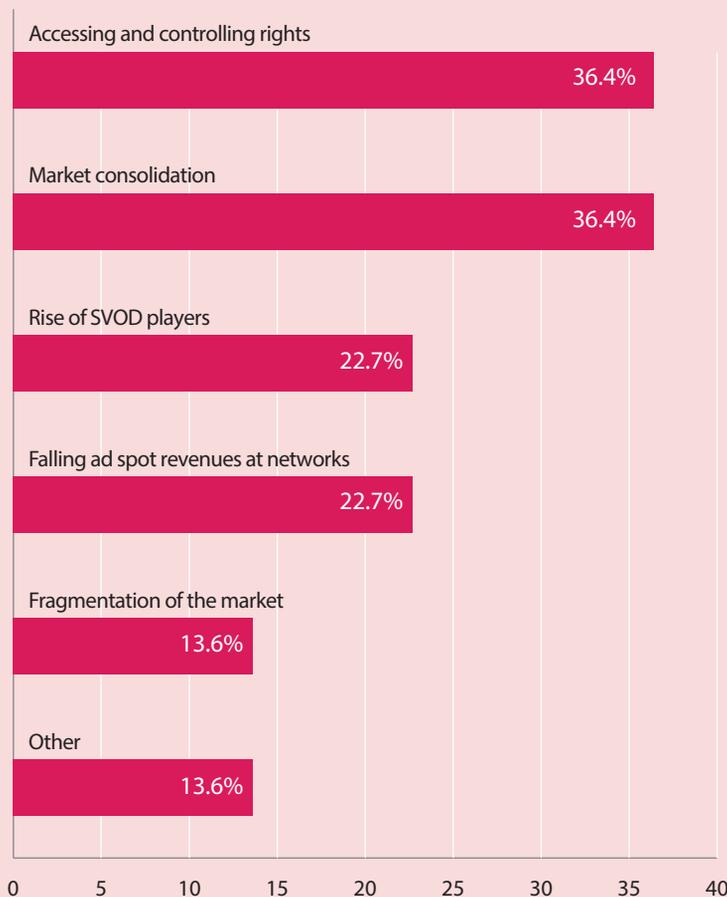
It is a different picture for cable and free-to-air broadcasters, unsurprisingly. More than 40% of respondents said budgets had decreased by more than 10%, while a similar number said budgets were static. Less than 20% said budgets from FTA and cablers had increased.

Yet it is evident that varying budgets are not the only obstacle for distributors of scripted programming. The impact of market consolidation and the ability to access and control rights have had the most effect on distributors, according to the survey: just over 36% of respondents cited these two issues as being among the factors causing the biggest challenges to the business over the past 12 months. But respondents, who were able to cite more than one issue, also highlighted myriad other challenges affecting their businesses: almost 23% said the ongoing rise of SVOD players had been among the issues providing the greatest challenges over the past year to August, while a similar number also cited the falling revenues from advertising as impacting the drama side of their businesses.

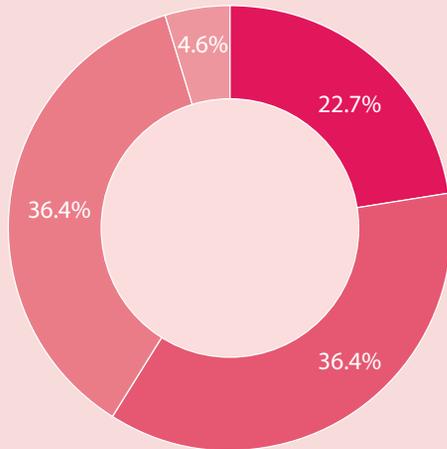
Such changes are driving shifts in both the types of content that are in demand and the prospects for companies of varying sizes. Crime continues to prove a key revenue driver, with more than 30% of respondents saying the genre was the most popular among acquisition execs, while drama also fared well, coming in at just over 27%. Distributors also said they expected demand for short-form scripted product – multiple episodes of 15 minutes or less – to rise: almost 50% reported that they believed demand would increase slightly and a further 14% said they expected it to rise rapidly.

There was also marked optimism amongst respondents, with 77% believing their own businesses would improve in the coming 12 months and almost 70% expecting the market to do likewise over the same period. More than 85%

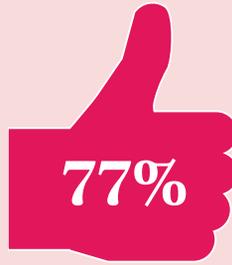
Which of the following issues has provided the greatest challenge for distribution over the past 12 months?



How has demand for your scripted programming (drama and comedy) changed over the past 12 months?



- Increased by more than 50%
- Increased by more than 25%
- Stayed the same
- Decreased by more than 50%



view global deals with SVOD services as a positive development for producers

said their catalogues had increased too, but issues over rights ownership, financing and investment and co-production were all among the most pressing issues.

The future for small and medium-sized firms was also brought into focus, with half of all respondents working in the scripted business admitting that they believed smaller firms were most at risk from market conditions. A further 40% believed it would be mid-sized firms facing the biggest squeeze, a point driven home by Francoise Nieto-Fong, head of distribution at Dutch Features.

“Large [firms] will usually have enough financial strength to diversify or merge. Smaller businesses have reduced overheads. Midsized have to make enough to cover their overheads and expenses, while fighting in a consolidating market,” Nieto-Fong says.

But for Maria Hernandez, director of international sales at RCN Television, the question comes to money. “The smaller you are, the easier you can adapt and adjust but what really determines whether you can survive or not is the amount of finance support you can access to to survive the storms – or the tough times.” **TBI**



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Barry Poznick: President, Unscripted Television

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FORMATS



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Unwritten rules of engagement

Unscripted content has faced intense competition in recent years as viewers have been deluged by drama but the genre is fighting back and interest is soaring, providing opportunities aplenty for distributors

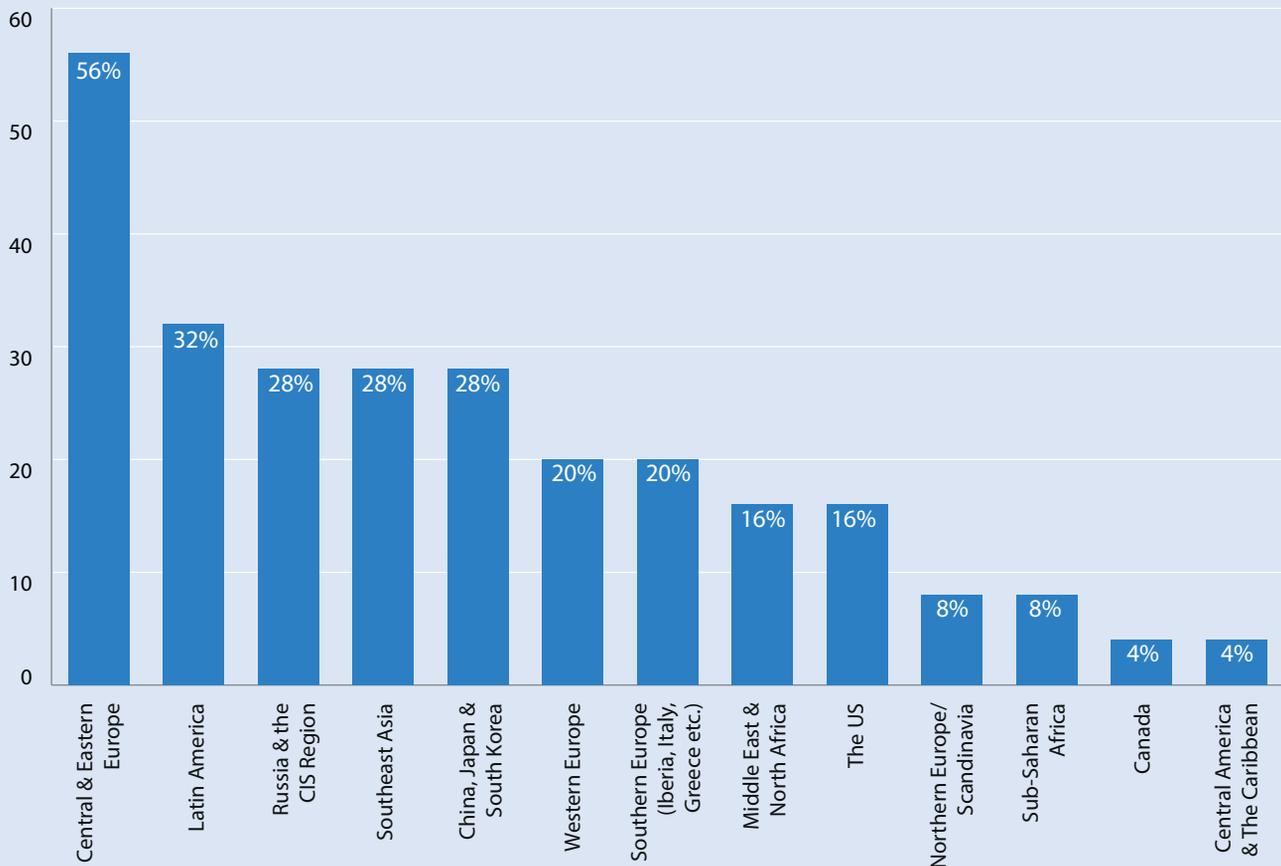
It is fair to say that distributors of unscripted content are feeling pretty bullish right now. While drama remains centre stage for some viewers, the breadth of unscripted programming on offer is surging and buyers are proliferating.

So perhaps it is no surprise that 64% of unscripted distributors said demand for their programming had increased by more than 25% over the past 12 months, with a further 8% stating that it had surged by more than 50% over that period. And given those figures, which suggest business has been going rather well over the past year, it is even more noteworthy that 96% of respondents believe their businesses will improve further over the next 12 months.

There are positive feelings about the entire industry, in fact, with 84% believing the market will improve over the next year. And every company said they had grown their catalogues over the last 12 months. But that is also where the picture becomes slightly less rosy.

While demand for product has risen (32% of respondents said buyers had increased by 10% over the past 12 months and a further 36% said the number of buyers had risen by more than 20% over the same period), it is clear that issues such as rights ownership and financing and investment are major concerns, with both being cited among the most pressing issues facing their businesses.

Where are the fastest-growing territories for your business when it comes to selling unscripted product?



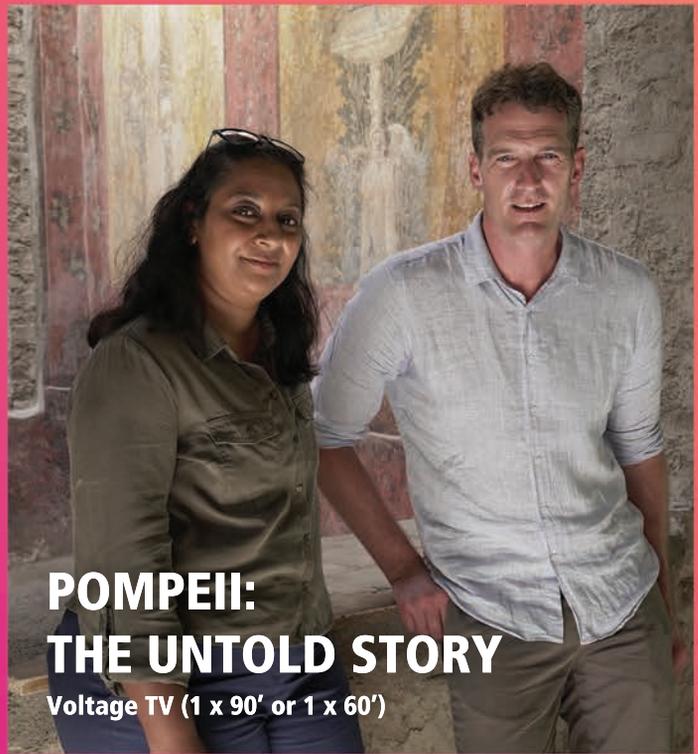
BRIDGING THE EXPANSE

Wildbear Entertainment (6 x 60')



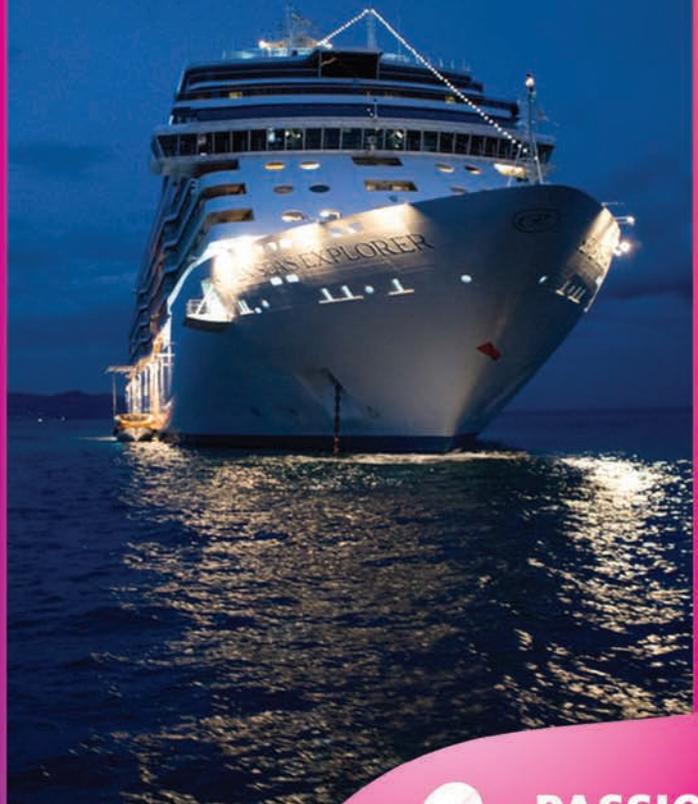
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Procuring product

Securing a pipeline of content does indeed appear to be a major challenge, with 44% of respondents saying that the competition to secure unscripted shows has never been greater. A further 40% believe competition has increased but is not at a historical high, but not one company said competition for product had decreased.

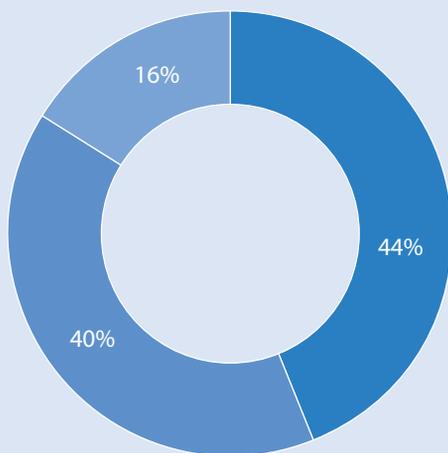
“Accessing and controlling rights has been a challenge with the market this year,” highlights Bob McCourt, COO of international at Fremantle. “We’ve witnessed all broadcasters and platforms fighting for exclusivity and longer holdbacks which can have an impact on second window sales.”

A similar picture is painted by Michael Murphy, general manager at Beyond Distribution, who believes the all-rights deals with SVODs will shift over the coming years.

“Once the current land grab for rights subsides, which it has to do, and the SVODs’ battle for subscribers plays out, and producers realise the limit on returns when all their rights eggs are in one SVOD basket, I predict that rights will start flowing back to broadcasters and to distributors,” he says.

“In line with this, linear channels may lose out on some content to SVODs now, and their budgets and

How has competition to secure unscripted shows changed over the past 12 months?



- Competition has never been greater
- Competition has increased but not at historic highs
- Competition has stayed the same
- † No reported decrease



96%
expect business to improve in the next 12 months

commissioning strategies may have to change, so they too will still need new content. I believe distributors will be well placed to take advantage.”

In the meantime, distributors are focusing their efforts on getting involved with projects at an earlier stage in order to secure rights, a practice that more than three quarters of respondents said they were doing.

“Our conversations with producers are increasingly starting at development stage,” says Karen Young, CEO at UK-based Orange Smarty. “Distributors are no longer seen as the last part of the jigsaw, producers recognise the benefits of nurturing a longer term, collaborative relationship where there is added value in shaping a project with international intelligence and early interest finance.”

And even for companies with associated production companies, the challenge of securing sufficient content can be intense, as Emmanuelle Namiech, CEO at Tinopolis-backed Passion Distribution, points out.

“Third-party programming still represents about two-thirds of our catalogue,” she says. “So 70-75% of our pipeline has been secured from collaborating with independent producers outside the Tinopolis Group but very few producers are not affiliated with a group or broadcaster today and the never-ending market consolidation is making access to content harder.”

Static budgets

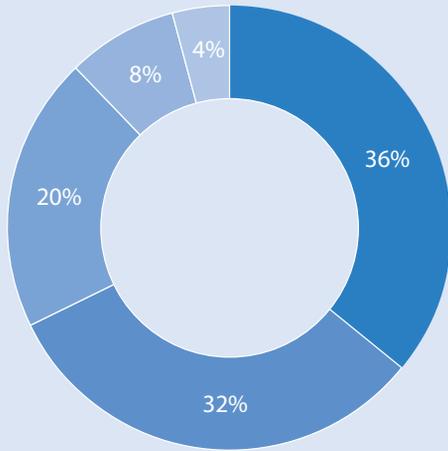
And that is not the only challenge. SVOD buyers’ budgets are static in many cases, with more than 50% of respondents stating they have remained the same over the past 12 months. Just over 15% of companies said budgets had risen by more than 25% during that same period, while 16% said the figure was greater than 10%.

For some, it is a different story when it comes to AVOD, where 40% of respondents said budgets had increased by more than 10%. Yet a similar proportion said budgets from this group of buyers had remained the same, while the cash available from cable and free-to-air networks remains a major challenge for many. Just over 55% of respondents said budgets from these broadcasters had remained the same, with almost 30% reporting a decrease of more than 10%.

“There is no longer the same level of finance put into commissions, meaning channels are looking to distributors to bring in finance from other sources,” says Young at Orange Smarty.

“The international market is also being hit with falling revenues so for this to be a successful model the UK has to support the UK production community

How have the numbers of buyers you're dealing with changed over the past 12 months?



- Increased by more than 20%
- Increased by more than 10%
- Stayed the same
- Decreased by more than 10%
- Decreased by more than 20%

76%

are looking to get involved with unscripted projects earlier than previously in order to secure IP

and come in with the finances in line with being a lead broadcaster and commissioner. Channels cannot expect the same level of quality without the budgets or a high percentage of the budget to match. At this time, strong established relationships, nimble decision making and exceptional grasp on international intelligence couldn't be more valuable."

So which regions of the world are providing most potential? "Asia, Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and Middle East and North Africa (MENA) continue to grow rapidly year on year," says Harriet Armston-Clarke, director of distribution at TVF International, a view backed up by the figures. Reflecting a similar trend in scripted and formats, more than 56% of respondents said CEE is one of the fastest growing regions, with Latin America (32%) and Russia and the CIS region (28%) also faring well.

Almost 30% of respondents also said Southeast Asia was among their fastest-growing parts of the world, with China, Japan and South Korea securing a similar response. Such a range, coupled with the increasing interest from SVOD, AVOD and other OTT buyers, highlights the increasing opportunities for those in the unscripted distribution business around the world – if they can get their hands on product, at least. **TBI**

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62nd ANNUAL GRAMMY AWARDS® – CBS – *New!*
Running time: 1 x 210' **Genre:** Music/Awards Show
 It's all about the music as the industry's biggest names perform on "Music's Biggest Night™" – the 62nd Annual GRAMMY Awards®, the world's most popular, and most prestigious, televised music awards show, to be broadcast in over 190 territories worldwide.



TOP 20 FUNNIEST – truTV
Running time: 49 x 60' **Genre:** Reality
 Laughter is the best medicine... and it makes for a great television show, too. TV's absolute FUNNIEST show includes comedic commentary over viral videos, home movies, news bloopers and more while we count down the week's most hilarious videos.



SHALLOW GRAVE – Crime & Investigation UK – *New!*
Running time: 8 x 60' **Genre:** Reality
 Murders have been committed elsewhere, with the victims' bodies transported and left at "the deposition site," or shallow grave. It's the most difficult crime puzzle of all – but can the police put the pieces together and crack the case?

Rebooting the remakes business

Streamers' growing interest in formats is providing new impetus and cash into this part of the business, but how can distributors make the most of these demands while keeping broadcast partners happy, too?

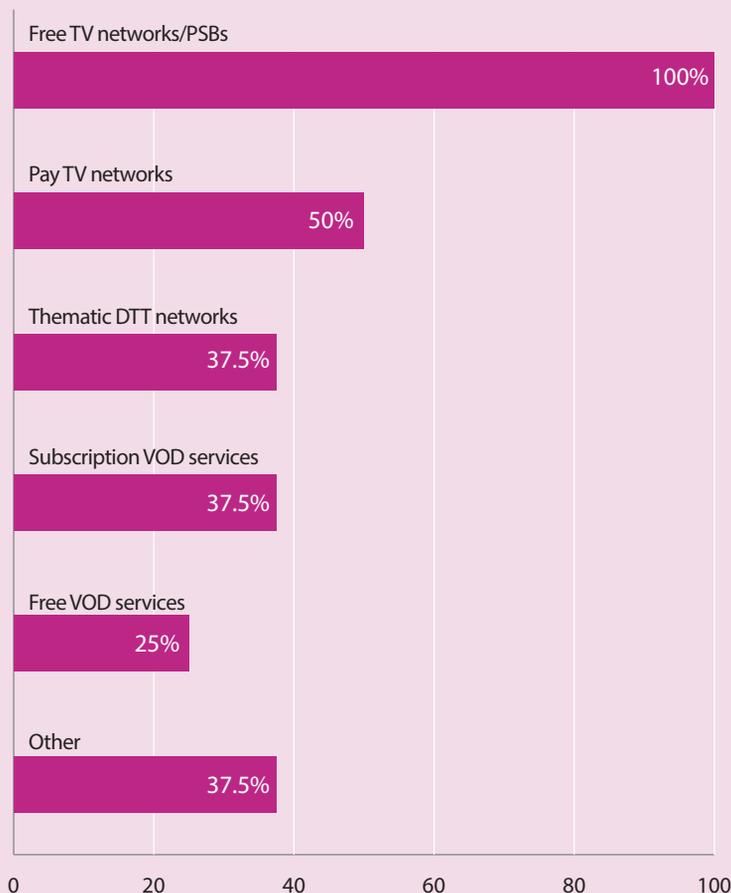
For some in the format business, the rise of SVOD services and their growing interest in formats is being seen as both a blessing and a curse. Streamers and their penchant for global rights deals looked for a time to be rewriting the traditional way that the format market worked, securing a hit show then transporting it country-by-country around the world to make your returns.

It remains unclear whether that model can persist in the longer term but for respondents of TBI's format distribution survey, the rise of SVOD players was not the only obstacle to have presented itself over the past 12 months. The major challenge

over the past 12 months, in fact, was the falling advertising revenues at networks, a problem that almost 40% of respondents identified with. Some 25% also said the SVOD surge was an issue, and others highlighted market consolidation as one of a number of challenges.

"With audiences consuming content heavily in a non-linear environment, it has increased the exclusivity that broadcasters will seek alongside the requirement for a longer and wider grant of not only catch-up VOD, but VOD for their stand-alone platforms," says Cathy Payne, chief executive at *Big Brother* and *All Together Now* distributor Endemol Shine International.

What type of buyers do you work with?



Allowing for advertising

For Bo Stehmeier, president at Red Arrow Studios International, the advertising market remains vital to the wider ecosystem. "Free-to-air, ad-funded linear broadcasters still account for a key portion of many distributors' revenues," he says.

"If the ad market isn't healthy this has a knock-on effect across the market; every investment is scrutinised; decisions take longer to be made; the more innovative projects tend to be shelved and overall there is less investment in new content. This in turn has a negative effect on the international distribution business."

Others cited the lack of risk-taking by broadcasters, which rely on tried and tested formats to reel in viewers as competition for their time surges. And that is having a knock-on effect for distributors, with Idil Belli, head of distribution at Turkey's Sera Film Services reflecting others in highlighting the fact that "timeslots are limited for new programming".

Despite the global rights positions of some SVODs, they are largely seen as a good thing for format distributors – three-quarters of respondents said they had been a positive development for the market.

Hugo Brisbois, head of distribution at Paris-based Widenn, which is behind shows such as *Hold On To Your Seat* and *My Partner Knows Best*, said SVODs were providing "competition to the

traditional broadcasters,” which, he added, was “a good thing for negotiations”.

But this side of the business is still clearly in its more nascent stages, reflected by Small World IFTs president Tim Crescenti’s admission that there are “more opportunities yet it is a ‘wild west’”.

Most also expect their businesses – and the format market as a whole – to improve over the next 12 months, but the challenge of rights ownership was a significant issue for companies, with 50% of respondents admitting it was their most pressing issue. Financing and investment came a close second, with more than 37% of votes.

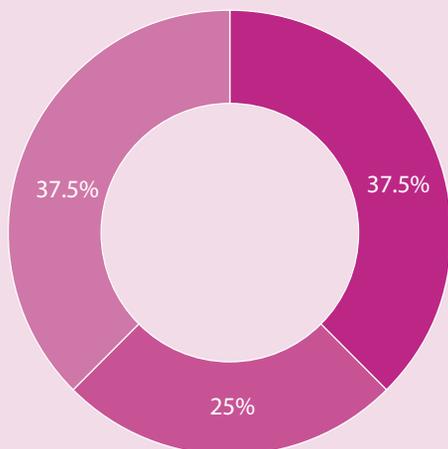
Dialling up demand

Yet there is clearly a bright outlook among format distributors, with almost 40% of respondents reporting that demand for their product has increased by more than 50% over the past 12 months.

A further quarter said demand was up by 25%, while all respondents said the number of buyers they were dealing with had risen over the same period – 50% reported buyers were up by 20%, while a further 50% said their acquisition clients had risen by at least 10%.

Free TV networks and public service broadcasters

How has your involvement in the marketing of your programmes changed in the past year?

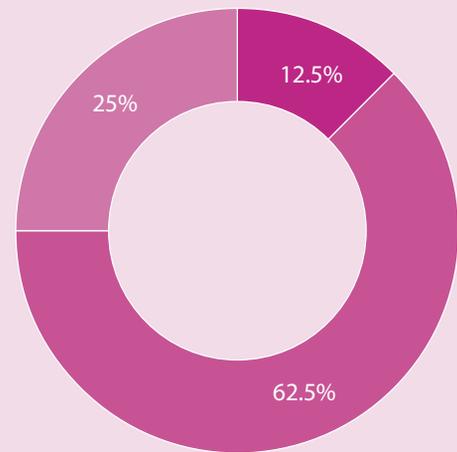


- Increased rapidly
- Increased slightly
- Stayed the same
- † No reported decrease



88%
 have noticed more interest in formats from SVOD/AVOD/OTT (Netflix, Amazon etc.) buyers

Which distributors are most at threat from market conditions?



- Small firms (1-20 staff)
- Mid-sized firms (20-50)
- Large (50+)

remain the most ubiquitous buyers, respondents said, with all companies working with such clients.

A smaller percentage, just over 37%, said they worked with SVODs while half said they counted pay TV networks among their client list.

There was also a noticeable uptick in the interest in formats from streamers, with almost 90% of respondents agreeing that these newer entrants were delving deeper into the format side of the content business.

In terms of what is actually selling, respondents were clear that factual entertainment formats remain among the most sought after type of show with buyers, along with gameshows and series that can be produced through ‘hubs’.

Demand, meanwhile, has been increasing across Europe, with over half of respondents reporting Central and Eastern Europe as one of the fastest growing regions when it comes to selling.

Elsewhere, Western European clients also fared well, while Russia and the CIS region plus the Middle East and North Africa were also cited as being regions where demand has been growing the fastest.

Working out how SVOD’s will continue to affect the format industry might still be a work in progress but it is clear that formats can still travel, even if it is not at the pace or extent that they once did. But the takeaway is clear: the remake business can still thrive on a global basis. **TBI**

Young and free

Kids have been the most ardent adopters of the OTT wave, with younger viewers in many territories now watching rapidly decreasing amounts of traditional linear TV. For distributors, the implications are clear but opportunities are emerging

Market consolidation and the ongoing rise of SVOD services are among the biggest disruptors to the distribution of kids programming, but there remains optimism that sales outfits can continue to prosper.

Almost 80% of respondents said they had noticed more demand for kids shows from SVOD and AVOD buyers, with budgets also ticking upwards. Just over 21% said budgets had risen in this part of the market by more than 25% over the past 12 months and a further 29% said they had noticed budgets increasing by more than 10%, with 35% reporting that budgets had remained the same.

But while demand for programming is up, so are the SVODs' demands for global rights, with almost 80% of respondents reporting that internationally facing OTT services wanted such rights packages when acquiring. There was an even split on whether these global deals are a positive development for distributors or not.

And while the interest and appetite for on demand viewing from kids appears unstoppable, it is continuing to have major repercussions on the distribution side of the market, with buyers wanting to be able to secure all manner of rights for their audiences.

"It impacts the market by making it challenging to satisfy the needs of your customer if you don't have all the rights," says Dominic Gardiner, CEO at Jetpack Distribution. "It can create more friction. It's not the perfect solution. Sometimes the deal terms are compromised. When a producer retains YouTube rights, for example, it might not be acceptable to a broadcaster in a given market."

Shutting windows

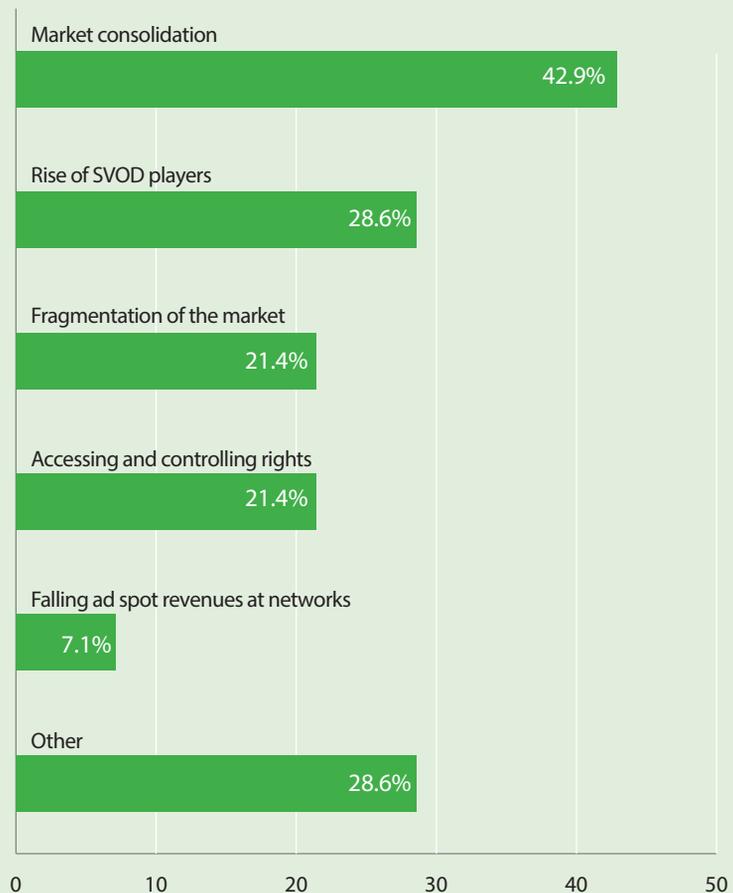
Indeed, for some, the windowing system is becoming increasingly complex, while for others, it is an increasingly fraught business, with the opportunities to sell myriad rights to different buyers drying up all together.

"The 'traditional' model is disappearing little by little," says Monica Levy, head of international

at France's Federation Kids and Family. "The 'windowing' – selling to multiple platforms with different license dates, a practice that distributors enjoyed for many years – is now nearing its end as all players want VOD rights."

These concerns are reflected in the fact that more than 40% of respondents stated that rights ownership was among their most pressing concerns. Financing and investment was an even greater issue, respondents said, with almost 60% believing this aspect of the business was most pressing.

Which of the following issues has provided the greatest challenge for distribution over the past 12 months?



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Consolidating concerns

The other major factor affecting kids distribution is consolidation, something that almost 80% of respondents said they expected to see more of. “I expect we will see more acquisitions like the Hasbro-Entertainment One purchase as well as more broadcast consolidation,” says Caroline Tyre, SVP of international sales and head of Genius Brands Network. “This introduces even more powerful players in to the marketplace, which often can lead to bigger output deals and more competitive slots.”

For Claudia Scott Hansen, SVP of global distribution at The Jim Henson Company, the M&A activity affecting children’s TV has had – and will continue to have – lasting implications on the distribution business.

“There is a cataclysmic shift in how companies are operating with all of the consolidation in the past 18 months,” she says. “This has been seen through content acquisitions as joined companies evaluate the ‘union’ of libraries and through evolving priorities from new management and strategies.



see global deals with SVOD services as a positive development for producers

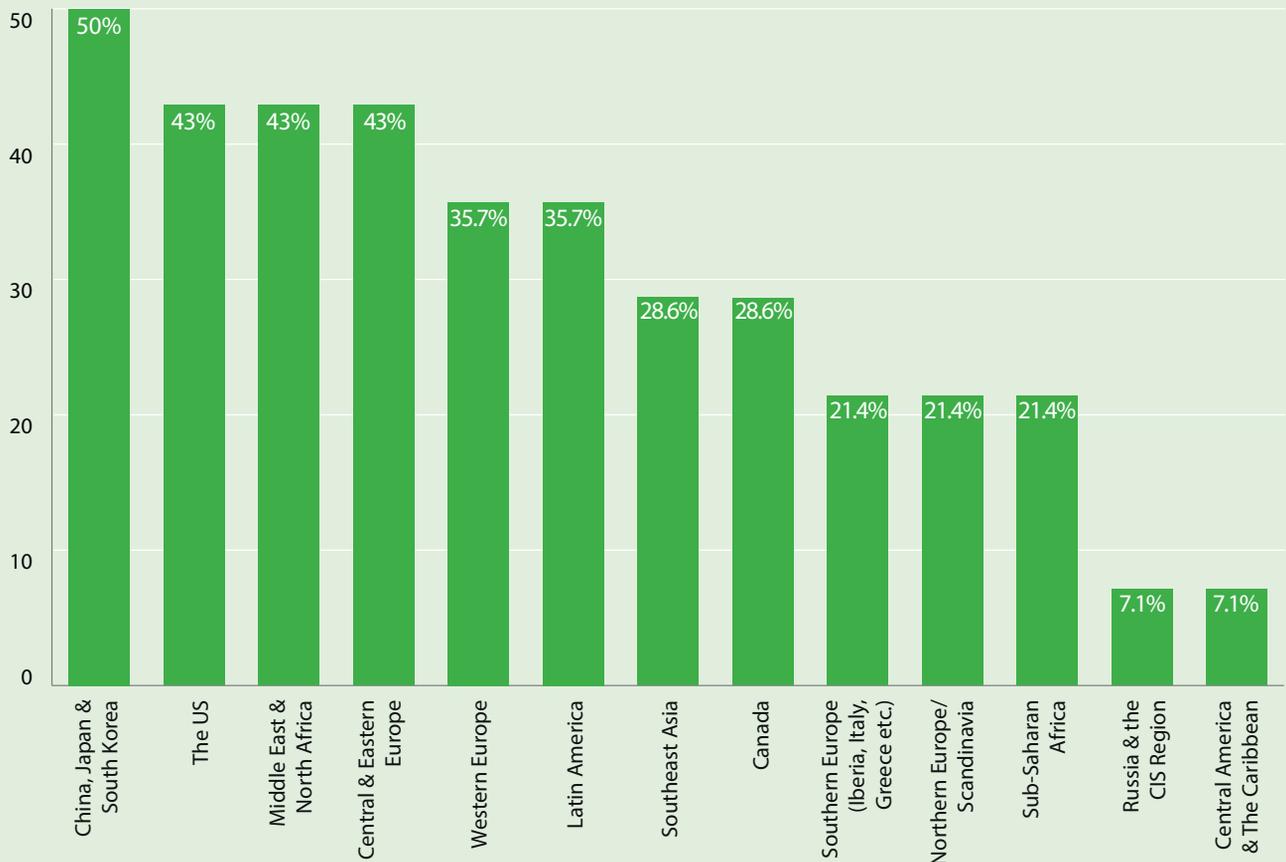
“The consolidation has also changed the platform landscape and rights management opportunities for distributors (mostly lack thereof, as media giants demand more complete control over IP).”

Clearly this is having ramifications for distributors, but more than 90% of respondents said they expected their businesses to improve in the next 12 months. There was however less certainty about the market as a whole, with only 65% of respondents believing the wider industry would improve.

Central and Eastern Europe emerged, again, as one of the fastest growing regions when it comes to selling kids product, with Middle East and North Africa also a major draw. Established markets such as the US were also cited as fast-growers, but it was China, Japan and South Korea that secured most votes, with 50% of respondents picking out those three countries as being among their fastest growing. Amidst the consolidation of companies in the West and broader SVOD growth around the world, the People’s Republic continues to offer opportunities in a fast-changing, challenging but growing market.

TBI

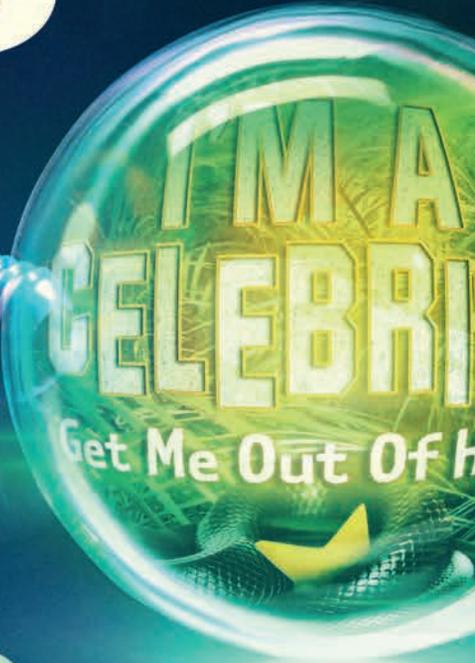
Where are the fastest-growing territories for your business when it comes to selling kids shows?



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Condensed thinking

TBI's 2019 Distributor Survey has illustrated both the opportunities and the 'glass-half full' outlook of many distributors, but also the differing challenges facing those operating across scripted, unscripted, formats and kids.

Across all four sections of TBI's 2019 Distributor Survey, there were a couple of key takeaways that keenly highlight just how the business of selling programming is rapidly changing regardless of sector.

Firstly, the bout of M&A that has been hitting most parts of the business – from Hasbro buying Entertainment One, to Disney acquiring Fox's entertainment assets and NBCUniversal incorporating Sky – is now being reflected in distribution.

Most obviously, it means some distribution banners are disappearing from markets altogether as a result. But delve deeper and there is also an impact on independent sales outfits, which had perhaps once been able to secure programming for unconsolidated firms for their own catalogues.

With vertical integration now the name of the game for huge swathes of the content business, the impact on distribution is clear. Securing product is becoming tougher across almost every sector, with mid-sized distributors seemingly at most according to respondents. Financing shows and moving up the chain are now key aspects for most distribution outfits.

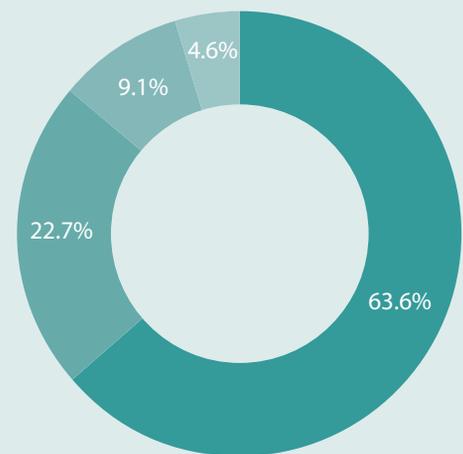
Secondly, it is clear that the impact of SVOD on distribution is still being keenly felt. And it is a fluid situation, with further changes likely as the influx of new US services enter the market and stretch their tentacles around the world, taking rights with them. More buyers are being reported across the scripted, unscripted, formats and kids business, but there is also that underlying competition for product to sell them, highlighting the inherent tension of the current distribution landscape. And for most sectors, the network business – be it free to air or pay – is not paying more for its product, meaning it is the newer OTT entrants who are driving disruption but also offering potential for growth.

All of this is playing into the wider business, not least the way shows are marketed to buyers and the events deemed important to attend. MIPCOM remains the stand-out event for the global TV business, with more than 80% of scripted



of format respondents think global deals with SVOD services are a positive development

How has competition to secure scripted shows changed over the past 12 months?



- Never been greater
- Increased but not at historical highs
- Stayed the same
- Decreased

distributors considering it a must-attend occasion. The same is true for those in the formats business (87%), unscripted (92%) and kids (86%), and while its sibling event MIPTV is considered less important, its place on the circuit remains relatively buoyant. More than 40% of scripted respondents consider it must-attend, and just over 62% of those working in formats agree, along with 64% of unscripted firms.

But competition is clearly kicking in and genre-focused events are vital, with myriad markets and conferences now dotting the distributor's calendars. For scripted and format-focused folk, NATPE Miami, LA Screenings and Asia TV Forum all score highly, while unscripted and kids distributors highlight Realscreen and Kidscreen as must-attend events for their respective genres. It is in some ways representative of the wider TV and distribution business as a whole: competition is hotting up. **TBI**

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Why consolidation doesn't scare Starz

Starz is the jewel in Lionsgate's crown, garnering interest from several deep-pocketed suitors. Superna Kalle, EVP of international digital networks, tells Manori Ravindran where the business is headed internationally and why it has its blinders on

Lionsgate-backed Starz has been operating in the orbit of a potential takeover for some time. CBS was believed to be in hot pursuit of the cable channel, making overtures in the ballpark of \$5bn this past spring. Then came the Viacom merger in August, which saw the Eye unite with the MTV and Paramount Network parent company, bringing together the likes of AVOD Pluto TV and SVOD service CBS All Access under the same umbrella. Could ViacomCBS shoot, again, for Starz? In a scale-oriented landscape where all bets are off around consolidation, anything is possible.

But one person who remains unfazed – and unafraid – of what the future might hold is Superna Kalle, EVP of international digital networks for the business, who has been overseeing the expansion of its successful global SVOD offering Starzplay.

“Consolidation actually doesn't scare me,” she tells TBI. “The content climate is very, very healthy irrespective of vertical integration. We have no problems bidding for content that some of the bigger players might have because we are very good at what we do in terms of sticking to the brand promise, and our price point is low.”

The job of her team, she says, is to “stick to our guns and our brand, which is premium drama for global audiences, and to curate the best possible service we can across the world”. While the Starz channel domestically targets an under-served female audience, the international offering is broader in appeal.

Kalle also references her new boss Jeff Hirsch, who recently became permanent CEO of Starz after heading the business on an interim basis since the departure of long-time exec Chris Albrecht earlier this year.

“Jeff made a great point a few months ago when he said Netflix has convinced everyone that if you don't have \$13bn to spend on content, you should take your ball and go home, which I thought was really smart, because that's exactly right.”

Netflix may be everything to everyone, but Starzplay, priced at around \$6 per month, is the premium add-on it has always been domestically, and increasingly, around the world. “Just like an HBO or Showtime,” points out Kalle.

“The content climate is very, very healthy irrespective of vertical integration. We have no problems bidding for content that some of the bigger players might have because we are very good at what we do in terms of sticking to the brand promise, and our price point is low.”

Superna Kalle



The Spanish Princess is one of Starz's top shows internationally

By the end of 2019, the platform will be in 51 countries. Some recent markets have been penetrated via partnerships with Apple TV, through which Starzplay will launch in countries such as Japan and Brazil.

Content strategy

Starz's offering at this point is a mix of originals such as *Sweetbitter* and *The Spanish Princess* (roughly 30%) and licensed content (70%). Anything that airs on Starz domestically lands on the platform – although some content such as *Outlander*, *American Gods* and *Power* have already been pre-sold for various series deals in certain countries.

“For Lionsgate-produced shows that don't necessarily air on Starz, we bid for it like everyone else. But as it's our sister company, we have a good feel for what they might be producing, and we work super closely together to try and figure out the best thing for Starz.”

In a May earnings call, Lionsgate boss John Feltheimer promised that the business would be “widening the creative aperture to ensure that we supply the Starz platform with programming that is right for its global footprint”.

How has that strategy manifested in content commissioned recently? Kalle points to the example of the Steven Soderbergh-exec produced anthology series *The Girlfriend Experience*.

“Season three was supposed to be set in Seattle, and we helped pivot the show to be set in London, so it will be perfect for an international audience and with an international cast,” says Kalle, who adds that when picking up domestic shows from the Lionsgate pipeline, international is always top of mind.

“*Dangerous Liaisons* is a show we bought domestically that was perfect for international,” she explains.

The period drama is an adaptation of the eponymous French novel and will be produced by UK producer Playground with Flame Ventures, with *Call The Midwife*'s Harriet Warner attached as showrunner and writer, and exec produced by Playground's Colin Callender and Tony Krantz.

Kalle won't be drawn on how much is being spent on originals but does note that the figure would be surprising, compared to Starz's deep-pocketed rivals.

"It's significant, but it would shock you," she says, adding that the business has been "amassing content by the truckload" via third-party relationships.

One recent acquisition is EPIX show *Pennyworth*, a DC origin story about Batman's butler. "That's an example of the type of show we are acquiring and airing," she says.

Despite studios snatching back content for a slate of new streamers on the horizon, Kalle is cool-headed about the realities of such efforts, which take years to come to fruition.

"So far, there is no impact at all – literally zero," she says. "Everyone who is vertically integrating is not ready for international and won't be for a while, so we've been able to pick up rights everywhere."

That said, the business is "swimming upstream more and more", adds Kalle. Getting in first is essential to not only get ahead, but also to stay there. "We're buying things straight from producers at the pitch and script level. We're getting shows that are not attached to a major studio, and [if] they would in the normal course, we are just getting in earlier," she says.

In effect, this gives Starz enough time to bulk up its pipeline for when the flow of scripted wares on offer is eventually disrupted.

"We are widening the creative aperture to ensure that we supply the Starz platform with programming that is right for its global footprint."

Jon Feltheimer



Sweetbitter forms part of the originals strategy

Distribution

Unlike many US companies that which have been slow on the draw with international, Starz is way ahead of the curve.

Earlier this year, Feltheimer pointed out that the international market is a "\$45bn opportunity" for Starz, that could result in up to 25m new international subscribers by 2025.

Indeed, in a saturated marketplace, it is impressive how well Starzplay has managed to differentiate itself overseas, particularly in regions such as the Middle East, where Starzplay Arabia has close to 1.2m subscribers – more than a third of the service's three million international subscribers.

The platform, which is operated out of Dubai, marked Starz's first international SVOD launch back in 2016 via a partnership between Starz and Sweden's Parsifal Entertainment Group, and reaches 17 countries in the Middle East and North Africa.

"The team there is very strong and savvy, and very familiar with the nuances of the region. They built a fantastic tech platform that's perfect for emerging markets and have content from multiple studios locked up. Another key to their success is their ability to integrate with telcos in the market for distribution."

The ingredients for a successful international launch, it seems, is going deep from a relationship standpoint, but also via tech integration.

Starz itself has key telco partnerships with the likes of Vodafone in India, Orange in Spain, Bell Media in Canada and Virgin Media in the UK. In addition, it is speaking to a number of smart TV manufacturers as well.

Distribution via aggregation services such as Amazon Channels and Apple TV have also been significant components of growth.

Starzplay was one of the first third-party applications to be discussed at Apple TV's star-studded unveiling in the spring, which highlighted a more streamlined mobility to shift from primary platform to a third-party channel. Through the Apple TV app, the business can now reach new customers on iPhones, iPads, Apple TVs and Samsung smart TVs in one fell swoop.

"[With] all of these bigger distributors going down that path, it makes it easier for consumers to find the product," says Kalle.

"Our strategy is to think three-prong in that we have the direct-to-consumer app coming in to the market; we've got local distributors like a Vodafone or Orange; and then we have these bigger global partners in Apple and Amazon."

Across all three, says Kalle, you really can't lose. **TBI**



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Sky's the limit

With the backing of Comcast and knock-out collaborations such as *Chernobyl*, pay-TV operator Sky and its newly formed Sky Studios is emerging as a drama player you'd be crazy to underestimate. Nick Edwards reports

When Sky revamped its original drama output in 2013, it aimed to create material that would match the quality of the series that had come to constitute the 'Golden Age' of TV drama, such as *Mad Men* and *The Wire*.

A series of glossy, experimental original productions arrived on Sky Atlantic alongside shows imported from the US. *Fortitude* combined Nordic Noir with a 'Lost-esque' sense of the unexplained. Remaking Nordic Noir hit *The Bridge* as *The Tunnel* was a bold

move – even if it may have left many critics unmoved. Meanwhile, other shows such as Lennie James's *Save Me*, the Idris Elba-starring *Guerrilla* and *The Last Panthers* with John Hurt and Samantha Morton all showed the pay-TV operator was intent on finding its own voice in an ever developing landscape.

But a few years later, once the dust had settled, audiences and the industry at home and abroad were still waiting for a 'must-see' break-out hit to materialise, particularly when Sky UK's non-English language sister company Sky Italia – with its



This summer, *Chernobyl* shattered records on IMDb as its highest rated TV series

underground, contemporary mafia saga *Gomorra* and Berlusconi-era political thriller *1992* – and to a lesser extent Sky Deutschland with Tom Tykwer’s Weimar Republic-set *Babylon Berlin*, seemed to be doing just that. Through a pricy output deal, fans of high-end drama in the UK were signing up to Sky Atlantic for HBO and Showtime content such as *Game Of Thrones* and *The Affair* rather than their own original productions.

And then *Chernobyl* came along. The first project to emerge from a \$250m co-production deal with HBO struck in 2017, the quality of the show about the 1986 meltdown of a Russian nuclear reactor stunned audiences on every aesthetic level and famously went on to achieve the highest ever IMDb rating for a TV series. But *Chernobyl* did not come out of the blue. A year earlier, an adaptation of Edward St Aubyn’s *Patrick Melrose* novels via a partnership with US cable channel Showtime won many awards including a BAFTA award for Benedict Cumberbatch.

Whilst some were put off by the opening episode, which featured Cumberbatch on an almighty bender, the narrative subsequently tackled child abuse and addiction – including some of the best observational scenes on mental illness ever realised in film or TV – and made clear you were watching something at the very high end of TV’s ‘Golden Age’.

Sky’s recently launched global production outfit Sky Studios will incorporate Sky Italia, Sky Deutschland and Sky UK and the business is to double its previous investment in scripted drama to around \$1.3bn per year over the next five years.

Upcoming Sky Atlantic projects include Jude Law-starring *The Third Day*, which marks another collaboration with HBO from *Utopia* creator Dennis Kelly and Felix Barrett of theatre group Punchdrunk; *Gangs of London*, a partnership with Cinemax produced by Pulse Films; and *Little Birds*, a solely Sky UK-commissioned six-part adaptation of the erotic novels by Anais Nin produced by Warp Films. All clearly aim to continue the success of *Patrick Melrose* and *Chernobyl*.

“In the early days, quite frankly, HBO didn’t need us,” says Gary Davey, CEO of Sky Studios. “They didn’t need us financially and they certainly didn’t need our creative input,” he says, referring to the legacy of landmark TV drama from HBO, which includes *The Sopranos*, *Six Feet Under* and *The Wire*.

However, it was this gestation period under Anne Mensah, who recently left to join Netflix, and Cameron Roach, who took over the reins as director of drama for Sky Studios, which proved Sky was a worthy partner to the best US content creators. Productions such as *Fortitude* and *The Last Panthers*

– the director of which incidentally also directed *Chernobyl* – proved there was no question Sky would support original, fully authored visions without any creative interference from above.

Sky Italia’s *The Young Pope*, a collaboration with HBO in which the enfant terrible of Italian cinema Paolo Sorrentino directs his first TV series, was particularly pivotal in building this trust, says Davey.

“You have to go way beyond a power-point presentation,” he says. “You actually have to deliver what you say you’re going to deliver.”

Former Kudos exec Jane Featherstone, whose company Sister Productions made *Chernobyl* and which executive produced *Gangs Of London*, has witnessed Sky’s development. “It takes a while to get drama working on a network but they’ve really done that now.”

The US industry used to focus only on itself. Being such a large market it, didn’t need to be successful beyond its borders. But as more and more US providers create ‘high-end’ niche content, the sum of audiences across the rest of the globe has become more and more significant. Europe, as one of the wealthiest regions in the world becomes a very attractive partner. And in this new landscape, Sky Studios is very well positioned for US co-producers who want to find a single partner with leverage across the whole of Europe, without having to run around trying to find multiple partners to sign off on financial and creative decisions before anything is greenlit.

Previously, however good an English, Danish or French show, the budget available meant they could not match the production values of a US series, but Sky Studios can now access budgets for UK and European shows that previously were reserved for productions with a streamer on board.

Now owned by Universal Pictures’ parent company Comcast, Sky Studios will also benefit from the



“What shows [such as *Chernobyl*] do is provide you with a short, sharp impact, and that is massively important for subscription services.”

Jane Featherstone
Sister Pictures



Sky Italia's *The Young Pope* was among the first crop of originals to break through

infrastructure of one of the biggest media companies in the world.

“To the outside world there won't be much difference, but we are better co-ordinated across the group in terms of forward planning and our portfolio. Producers will still be experts in their individual territories,” says Roach of the future of Sky's partners.

The TV drama industry changes significantly every two to three years and for the last few years, the existential threat to public service broadcasters and their commercial rivals has been Netflix. However, with new direct-to-consumer strategies being adopted by the likes of Disney, Apple and Facebook, this is creating significant real-world challenges to Netflix's perceived dominance. Ominously, for the first time Netflix's US subscribers dropped off this year and, of course, there is still the very heavy debt burden they carry – the result of a business model that creates and buys more and more content in the hope of growing subscribers before making a profit. Now the challenge for all providers is to get the public to notice a new production in the sheer blizzard of content available to them.

“For Sky and for everybody else, what they need to [do] right now is cut through, [so] you have to pick projects that aim to be explosive,” says Thomas Benski, co-founder and CEO of Pulse Films whose *Gangs Of London* will air on Sky Atlantic.

The project, set in a crime-ridden, dystopian capital of the near future, is the vision of Gareth Evans, the celebrated director of the *Raid* franchise, an Indonesia-set action flick that gained many art-house plaudits. A 20-minute clip of *Gangs Of London* was shown at the Série Series TV festival in Fontainebleau, France, earlier in the year.

The ultra-violent sequence has the feel of sixties gangster films such as *Get Carter* combined with the

martial arts choreography of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, and features Londoner of Nigerian heritage Sope Dirisu as lead. Like other break-through hits of recent times, such as *Chernobyl*, HBO's *Euphoria*, and Netflix's *When They See Us*, it is unlike anything seen on TV before. These projects shake up the perception of what TV can be. The ethos of Sky Studios is to provide an environment where talent can achieve this level of work.

“Philosophically, you can embark on something that wants to take risks, that tries to break the mould – and at scale,” says Lucas Ochoa, chief creative officer for film and TV at Pulse.

The old US model of long, returning series was about advertising on the networks and sales and syndication for cable providers, such as HBO. Companies needed ‘volume’ in returning series that could be sold around the world, but with these kinds of shows, which are often limited series, the value is not in sales.

“What these shows do is provide you with a short, sharp impact, and that is massively important for subscription services,” explains Featherstone.

Not only do these productions gain coverage in the press and social media, but they also create memorability that makes a TV brand stand out. They can then sit in a provider's library as part of an overall offering for subscribers. For example, series such as *Oz*, *The Wire* and *The Sopranos* are still considered the best TV of recent years, but were all greenlit before 2003.

“There's a mixed ecology today,” says Roach. “There will be returning series, event series, as well as special one-off pieces.”

“What's changed is that things you may not have been able to front as subject matter in the past [such as *Chernobyl*], you now can, and there is actually a huge appetite for them,” says Featherstone.

Viewers now expect the unexpected and the industry has to consider how it will generate new stories over the next few years. “Part of the ethos of Sky Studios,” says Roach, “is to innovate how development works, and we will work with more new and diverse voices, and be less London-centric [in the UK].”

The recent concern amongst fans and the industry that we have moved from a ‘Golden Age’ to an era of ‘peak’ TV – an over-abundance of high-quality TV drama – should be placated by the quality of these new productions. In fact, it seems as if all these changes in the industry are making TV drama an even richer experience for the viewer. As Sky Studios demonstrates, perhaps our ‘Golden Age’ is simply taking on a fascinating new character. **TBI**



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Breaking the taboo: How do we navigate mental health in TV?

Mental ill-health in the TV sector is an unspoken reality for many working in the field. Finally, these issues are in the spotlight. The UK's Film and TV Charity recently launched the industry-wide Looking Glass survey to get a snapshot of the well-being of TV workers. Ahead of findings being released next year, TBI can reveal that the proportion of people in the film and TV industries who have experienced mental ill-health is 86% compared to 66% in the general population. We gathered top mental health campaigners to discuss ideas for change. By Manori Ravindran



Kate Beal,
CEO, Woodcut Media



Rebecca Day,
Founder, Film in Mind



Emma Loach,
Commissioner
(Documentaries), BBC



Alex Pumfrey, CEO,
The Film and TV Charity



Davey Shields, Freelancer/
Founder, MenTalkHealth

Why did you launch The Looking Glass survey, and what can you share about the results?

AP (FTVC): With the emergence of the Me Too movement, it triggered a need to understand what was going on and why we were creating these environments that seemed to do people real harm. We now have a responsibility to understand what people are saying and come up with impactful solutions. We ran the survey for three weeks and got nearly 9,000 responses

The proportion of people within the industry that have experienced mental ill-health is 86% compared to 66% in the general population. Around 9 out of 10 of everyone working in the industry has experienced mental ill-health, so this isn't an issue at the margins – this is mainstream

More women responded than men, which is interesting because there tends to be more stigma around men talking about mental health. There is a divide between production versus sales, marketing, distribution and other elements, as well as differences within genres. For example, when you look at sports versus reality versus factual, you see differences there. However, the cultural trends that underpin it all are pretty consistent

EL (BBC): It's indicative of how, for decades, we've been told what a privilege it is to work in the industry. The idea that you would complain or have any issues was so tramped down. So, as soon as someone asks the question, there is a freedom of, 'Actually, yes, I have loads to say'

DS (MenTalkHealth): As freelancers, you come into a production company and you are very separate, because you're not full-time, you don't have that connection to HR, or access to the same rights and benefits. With this survey, there are 9,000 people who are basically saying, 'Now we have somewhere we can say this without fear of not getting work or being reprimanded'

KB (Woodcut): Thirty years ago, there was more of a training ground, and jobs were sustainable. They were jobs for life, and I'm not saying that was necessarily right or wrong, but the economy of TV has changed into this freelance economy where we've lost any kind of ability to nurture people through their careers

AP (FTVC): There is also a narrative of toughness we peddle in our industry because of the freelance nature of it, and because you always have to have your game face on to find the next gig. There are those who are really optimistic about what we can fundamentally change, but there's a hell of a lot of cynicism and people who say, 'It's just the way it is. It's just the way it works. You've got to be really tough.' That's an interesting challenge

EL (BBC): Whilst we have a focus on mental health, a lot of people will still be attracted to resilience and a good game face. That's what's attractive to employers, because that's the only way they've known to make a film



How does financial anxiety among freelancers and the lack of finances to support mental health fit into this discussion?

RD (Film in Mind): In the independent sector, there is a lack of infrastructure and distribution of finance for doc makers, where you have producers and directors winning awards at Sundance but unable to pay their rent. You don't feel that success in the way that you should because the finances don't reflect the work you're doing

DS (MenTalkHealth): One of the most startling things I experienced was a small company that wanted to hire me but couldn't because they couldn't afford for me to be sick. They said, 'If you don't do this job, we lose our money and the lights go off. We're that small and independent'. There are companies that want to help, but we don't have a system in place to allow them to take that risk

KB (Woodcut): You're 100% correct. Because on a number of issues we have policies and good intentions, but if you're scrambling to get something out the door, and haven't got the budget you need, you can only see six months ahead and it's hard to put any meaningful change in place

AP (FTVC): With the work we're doing, we're trying to get widespread industry buy-in, because ultimately our work is going to be about coming up with a

"This is going to be tough. When you say to people, 'We have to do it differently', you're going to get all sorts of responses. There are bits of this that will feel very hard to change but it's absolutely the right things to do and the right time to do it"

Alex Pumfrey



programme of interventions and a fund that can offer this support for all those people who don't have any in those sorts of employment situations

RD (Film in Mind): That's really heartening to hear, because I've been stuck in that position for a while, where I am saying to my industry – the indie documentary community – that I can offer counselling, but no one has the money to pay for it. The ideal situation would be for me to have funding so I can distribute my services and filmmakers can access it

AP (FTVC): You can say there is a moral imperative to do better on these things, but there is a business case. The government's mental health strategy shows that employers on average lose about £1,000 (\$1,230) per employee a year due to poor mental health, and we are an industry of nearly 200,000 people, so it's easy to say that we're losing hundreds of millions of pounds because of poor mental health.

Financial anxiety is a real taboo. There are a lot of people we have heard from with awards to their name, who are about to default on their mortgage

How do we support one another in the industry? Davey, you've had a very positive experience with Banijay's IWC – can you tell us about it?

DS (MenTalkHealth): I have worked in TV for 10 years. I was diagnosed with depression 15 years ago and now I have Borderline Personality Disorder. If



things get really extreme and I'm running on empty for two weeks in a row, that's when it becomes a real problem. I was working in Brighton on a busy production and I was good at looking after people. But one day, I reached my breaking point and had to take a step back.

All my job offers had dried up after people heard about my breakdown and I was battling suicide, but IWC brought me in. I worked on a heavily formatted programme, *Location, Location, Location*. Three years later, I work as an AP and I don't go on shoots, but I'll work with a researcher ready to step up so there's a benefit for the production company. I'm also the only Mental Health First Aider at IWC so I help them find solutions that might work for the production when someone is struggling. I have now trained seven APs who have gone on to do shooting on the show. It's now down to getting the rest of the industry to do that so we don't lose creative people

EL (BBC): With our commissioners, we ensure a package is there for the team, so if you're working on something like *Ambulance* or *Hospital*, part of the editorial spec is to make sure there is something in place to look after people's mental health and a phone number. The structure is in place

Has that process been updated recently?

EL (BBC): Yes. It's been happening on an ad hoc basis ever since I was an exec producer, which is eight years ago. As an EP, I would always put things in place but recently it's become part of the editorial spec, too

DS (MenTalkHealth): We need to do more of that. We have great initiatives around meeting green targets

Ideas for change

- Whistleblower phone line
- BBC/Channel 4-backed guidelines for indies
- Mental health inclusion in health and safety checks
- Training for Mental Health First Aiders
- Breaking stereotypes of 'production mum', 'creative genius'
- Mandatory exit interviews for freelancers
- Dedicated supervisors for freelancers
- Open mental health discussions prompted by top execs

to win a commission. Part of a mental health remit can be having training for three people on the team to be Mental Health First Aiders during a certain project. That's the way it can trickle down. Prodcos want to put these things in place, but because it's all about costs, they don't have that option

EL (BBC): The BBC has been talking to Channel 4 about exactly those things since spring. We're hoping to do a pan-broadcaster initiative that will look at exactly that – what our responsibilities are and how we can work with the industry to prevent those cases when someone wants to look after the mental health of their team but can't afford to

AP (FTVC): The analogy here would be health and safety. So, when you've commissioned something at Channel 4, for example, it goes through business affairs for all the checks on health and safety, which is all about physical health. Where it's a legal requirement, it's pretty good at being fulfilled, but just because mental health isn't a legal requirement, it doesn't mean it's not as important

EL (BBC): Within the BBC, we have 900 Mental Health First Aiders now who wear certain colour lanyards and anyone can access them. Change is happening at the BBC but it's how we effect change in the independent sector

How close are you to formalising the initiative with Channel 4?

EL (BBC): We're hoping to come up with guidelines that can ensure indies have Mental Health First Aiders, help managers spot mental health issues and train them up with coaching and counselling, etc. It's things like making it a requirement on your first day to read guidelines with your line manager and tick you read them, and when you leave that job, read them again with your line manager and then have an exit interview

DS (MenTalkHealth): With a lot of these cases, there are systems in place but as freelancers, we don't know about them because we're in this bubble. But actually, there are lots of things we don't seem to know about, so how do we change that?

How do we deal with sensitive subject matter and the mental health challenges that arise from those? Woodcut, for example, does a lot of true crime. How do you navigate that, Kate?

KB (Woodcut): Our true crime productions were

more by accident and they have grown and grown and grown. Now, we're in a situation where we've made 130-140 hours in the last few years. How we manage is that all the true crime team members – from editor to runner to series producer – have monthly check-in meetings. This has grown because we thought we really needed to look at this, because the true crime content focus was unplanned. TV is often like that: production companies will suddenly go on a journey down one type of programming

Have you had instances where people have had to leave because of the content?

KB: We're very upfront in the interviews so people know what they're getting into, but it comes up in the monthly one-to-ones. We have had instances where we've moved someone to another programme or into development for a sustained amount of time so they could then decide what they want to do. When they say, 'I'm not coping with this subject matter', we want to prevent them walking out the door

Who takes responsibility for freelancers, ultimately? Is there an inherent issue around reliability here?

AP (FTVC): That raises the question of what support there is for freelancers because they will move on and won't work for you forever. If they are five years down the line and there's an issue that arises, where can they go? For those cases, we are trying to think of what the bigger version of the support line might be. For example, if freelancers had a fantastic HR department, what would it look like?

RD (Film in Mind): Because it can't always be the responsibility of people like Kate at Woodcut to pick

“We have great initiatives around meeting green targets to win a commission. Part of a mental health remit can be having training for three people on the team to be Mental Health First Aiders during a certain project. That's the way it can trickle down”

Davey Shields



£1,000
Average annual loss per employee due to poor mental health



it up, because your freelancer may not be with you anymore

AP (FTVC): There is a collective responsibility for the industry, because if we all need a freelance workforce, which we do, and those people flow between different shows and productions, then it's incumbent upon the whole industry to support that freelance workforce

EL (BBC): It's the uniqueness of freelancing, because if you're staff as a researcher or AP, there is an awareness from your line manager that you've just done six months of a really heavy real crime series, so let's put you in development for a couple of month and you can go home at 5pm every day. Whereas if you're freelance, you go from one job to being home watching daytime telly, to another job that's dealing with equally difficult content. So, thinking about what a freelancer's HQ would look like is absolutely the question

RD (Film in Mind): That's why I'm interested in developing some kind of supervision role for freelancers, where you check in with someone on a regular basis. The regularity of it helps because you don't need to be in a heightened state of anxiety to have supervision

But how will you fund those roles?

RD (Film in Mind): Exactly

EL (BBC): Lots of fortunate people have mentors who can give them advice, but loads of people don't have that, so it's about codifying that

AP (FTVC): ...And making sure it goes all the way up the tree

RD (Film in Mind): Yes, if we're going to be honest about the hierarchy, it's not just saying the people at the bottom need support, it's all the way up to the top

KB (Woodcut): Within your own company or structure, because of the team nature of TV, there is always that person. The production manager does often become the mother figure

AP (FTVC): I've heard the term 'production mum' a few times and the sentiment of it is lovely but we do need to be mindful of where men fit into the picture, because there is a stigma around men talking about mental health

EL (BBC): I agree. There are also other stereotypes,

which is that creative people behave badly sometimes because they're 'brilliant' at their jobs. Both these things need to be really examined because we know from lots of people that you can be brilliantly creative and talented and behave well. And that's a shock for all of us who've been in TV for 20 years because we thought if you behaved well, that probably meant you weren't very good at your job

AP (FTVC): That mad creative genius trope, which is really pervasive. Like you, I instinctively resist the idea that you have to be slightly on the edge and behave badly to be brilliant at what you do

Is there enough calling out happening? You saw that with Time's Up and Me Too in the US. Could mental health garner similar momentum here?

EL (BBC): I'm not sure it is happening enough. A lot of it happens to younger people in the industry who have no power within that situation to do anything about it. In my early 20s, we put up with lots of things and when Me Too happened, I started talking about them with younger women, and you realise nothing has changed. It's the same with mental health. I don't think we are calling out people enough about their behaviour

RD (Film in Mind): Especially when you're very transient and moving from company to company, or working alone and you're isolated



“For decades, we’ve been told what a privilege it is to work in the industry. The idea that you would complain or have any issues with working in the industry was so tramped down”

Emma Loach



AP (FTVC): There is no meaningful recourse. Where is the jeopardy for people?

EL (BBC): Which is why we have ideas that we want to talk to you about, Alex. Perhaps there's room for a Whistleblower line?

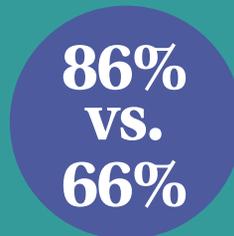
AP (FTVC): This is the nettle we have to try to grasp. When we launched the support line, the question I got asked everywhere was, 'Is it a whistleblowing service?' and I kept going 'No it's not because it doesn't have a feedback loop'. Because you need to be able to go back to someone and pick it up with them or mediate it or take some action. Within a company, that's something you can do, but within a freelance environment, it's virtually impossible

RD (Film in Mind): That's one of the dangers of the 'production mum' role – there's no impartiality in that role. There's an intimacy you don't want in your supervision role

EL (BBC): It's a real problem that needs real solutions because until all people across the industry can call out bad practice and effect change because of it, things won't change

Alex, what's your top priority to effect solutions going forward?

AP (FTVC): I'm not interested in us all agreeing a set of guidelines about how we behave – there has to be follow-through. We've done good work with Times Up but there are still issues there. This is going to be tough. When you say to people, 'We have to do it differently', you're going to get all sorts of responses. This will feel very hard to change but it's absolutely the right things to do and the right time to do it. **TBI**



People in film and TV who have experienced mental ill-health vs. the general population

3 PRESTIGIOUS CHEF WILL NOT JUST BE JUDGES OR MENTORS,
THEY WILL BE

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An American in Paris

Darren Star, creator of *Beverly Hills 90210* and *Sex And The City*, brings his Midas touch to France with his first international foray, Paramount Network's *Emily In Paris*. Manori Ravindran reports

In a cut-throat landscape that has seen studio romcoms become an endangered offering, you can count on Darren Star, the powerhouse creator behind *Sex And The City*, to bring back the magic and the meet-cutes.

Star has been trading in brownstones for bistros since July, hard at work in France on Paramount Network's *Emily In Paris* – a 10-part series about a transplanted Midwesterner hired to ‘Americanise’ a French marketing firm. It's the classic fish-out-of-water story, explains Star, but hits a spot you don't much see in film and TV anymore.

“They just don't make those big studio romantic comedies the way they used to,” complains Star, nestled in a Parisian apartment with his Emily, the effervescent Lily Collins, cast in large part due to her turn in 2014's *Love, Rosie*.

“This fills that slot,” he says. This is that big romantic comedy. “It's got the feel of *Devil Wears Prada*,” adds Star, who also cites classic films such as 1954's *Sabrina* starring Audrey Hepburn, which similarly has a Parisian flavour.

It's also one of all-American Star's most international efforts to date. The prolific creative's headline credits include the likes of Fox's *Beverly Hills 90210* and *Melrose Place* and TV Land's *Younger* – none of which have ventured very far from prime zip codes in Los Angeles or New York.

With *Emily In Paris*, however, Star is fully ensconced in Parisian culture across a four-month shoot.



Darren Star says *Emily In Paris* has the feel of *The Devil Wears Prada*

The entire production is shot in the French capital, he notes, with a largely French crew and several prominent local actors, such as Philippine Leroy Beaulieu (*Call My Agent!*), Samuel Arnold (*Antony & Cleopatra*) and Camille Razat (*The 15:17 to Paris*).

“We're not grabbing the beauty shots of Paris and shooting in the US,” he says. “The whole show gets informed by being here in the way that *Sex And The City* wasn't filmed in Los Angeles – it was filmed in New York. Nothing here is a stand-in.”

Star instantly gives the impression of a hands-on

creative who has not, for a second, rested on his laurels.

Across the course of almost three decades in television, he has created timeless characters who have shaped popular culture, whether it's *Beverly Hills 90210*'s formidable Brenda Walsh or *Sex And The City*'s columnist-cum-fashion icon Carrie Bradshaw. The cities of Star's shows, too, have become characters in and of themselves, best evidenced by innumerable tours of filming locations that remain popular with tourists.

Paris, it seems, is next to receive the Star treatment.

"It's important to get the texture of the show, and anyone that watches this show will have that experience of being in Paris. That's what I wanted to do," he says. "Viewers want a transporting experience and that's what this show is going to give them – they're going to see Paris in a depth they haven't seen before."

The exec cautions, however, that *Emily In Paris* is not *Sex And The City* redux. "They're apples and oranges," he says. "This is a story about an American woman coming of age, and how she's changed by being here and how she changes people around her."

After a second, he adds, "I haven't seen a really international show like this before."

Certainly, *Emily In Paris* will air on Paramount Network Channel internationally, overseen by Jill Offman, EVP of Paramount Network International. But then?

Star, who describes the series as "a feel-good show that is meant to be purely entertaining and escapist", will land "some kind of streaming deal", though it's yet undecided what that might be.

He is hyper-aware of how his shows are distributed, knowing full well how programming today can quickly get lost in the rabbit hole of streamers. "Finding shows is important," he says. "Even a show like *Younger* is on TV Land, but a lot of times, people find it on Hulu."

It's a challenge, he admits. Especially when Netflix is "first on mind for a lot of people".

"Is it on Netflix?" is the question," he says, adding that such distribution quandaries are ultimately "high-class problems" for everyone involved. And to be fair, he's been around long enough to speak authoritatively on the matter.

Star remembers a time when HBO didn't have the brand awareness around TV that it holds, relatively effortlessly, today.

"HBO was a tiny universe at the time *Sex And The City* came on. It wasn't known for series, so I had to shake people into watching by saying 'Watch this show on HBO', and they're like, 'What do you mean?

Watch this series on HBO?' It was not a place where people saw TV series."

Star – who has an overall deal with Viacom – has yet to write directly for a streamer, but his writing process, like so many others, is not exempt from the SVOD influence.

"When I started *Younger*, I was conscious of the fact that it would eventually land on a streaming platform, so I wanted the show to have cliff-hangers, [where] every episode would drive you into the next one," he says of the drama, which was recently greenlit for a seventh season on TV Land.

Incidentally, TBI understands that *Younger* – which stars Sutton Foster as a woman who lies about her age to get ahead in the cut-throat world of publishing – has scored a UK remake, with an hour-long version of the traditionally half-hour show now in the works.

It is also being remade in China by Endemol Shine China and Huace Group, and in Korea via a deal with JTBC Content Hub. A Russian show is also in the pipeline.

Indeed, Star appears far more interested in the global remakes of his shows than the domestic reboots, which have been exhaustive and without the longevity of the

"People come to our channel seeking quality programming with real cinematic value that gives them a strong sense of place, so *Emily In Paris* is the perfect fit for our audience"

Jill Offman



Much like *Sex And The City*, *Emily In Paris* "celebrates" its city

Emily In Paris star Lily Collins was cast in large part due to her turn in romcom *Love, Rosie*



Paramount's "premium popcorn"

Jill Offman, EVP of Paramount Network International, describes *Emily In Paris* as a "perfect tentpole programme" for the brand's global network of channels.

While it's still unclear which territories will air the show as part of its offering – especially as a streaming deal is in the mix, according to Star – Offman says the show encompasses "all the things we want".

"The story is highly aspirational, and the series gives a strong sense of place, which is even echoed in its title," she tells TBI. "People come to our channel seeking quality programming with real cinematic value that gives them a strong sense of place, so *Emily In Paris* is the perfect fit for our audience."

Offman – who also oversees Comedy Central globally – says Paramount aspires to be "purveyors of escapism" and describes the brand as "premium popcorn". Because it is available internationally both on linear and VOD, via Paramount+, it can afford to be "a little more upmarket and global with our content".

"From *Yellowstone*, *Waco* and *Line Of Duty* to *Killing Eve*, which airs on our channels in Latin America, our programming has depth and cinematic value. Much like visiting a cinema to watch a movie, our programming allows viewers to completely immerse themselves from the moment they turn on the TV or access Paramount+," says Offman.

While Paramount Network International reaches around 122 countries, Paramount+ is currently expanding. It now reaches millions of subscribers in Latin America (Mexico and Brazil), the Nordics (Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland) and Central and Eastern Europe (Poland and Hungary).

originals.

Beverly Hills 90210 was rebooted in 2008 with The CW's *90210*, while *Melrose Place* – itself a spin-off of *Beverly Hills* that aired from 1992 to 1999 – received a revival in 2009, also on The CW.

And then there was The CW's short-lived *Sex And The City* prequel *The Carrie Diaries* in 2013, and the recent Fox reboot *BH90210*, which premiered in August.

One has to wonder, does Star think long game? Does he envision how a project might be rebooted down the line when he's crafting certain characters?

"They don't even enter into my mind," he says categorically. "You're thinking of version one, and hoping that will be successful."

But he does get a "big kick" out of them, he says, particularly knowing the original actors as well as he does. Of Fox's latest incarnation of *Beverly Hills* – which reunites original cast members including Jason Priestley, Shannen Doherty, Jennie Garth and Ian Ziering – Star says it was "cleverly done".

"To me, it spoke to the cast and how appealing they are to watch all these years later. Certainly, they were playing versions of themselves, but beyond that, it was just the chemistry. That cast is really timeless. They're still so fun to watch." **TBI**



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One to One: A year of Facebook Watch

TBI's 'One to One', in which industry heavyweights put each other in the hot seat, returns with the powerhouse coupling of Facebook's Dan Biddle and Barcroft Studios' Sam Barcroft, who lift the lid on the challenges and opportunities of producing for Facebook Watch. By Manori Ravindran

Biddle and Barcroft are no strangers to innovation. They've worked together in a number of different capacities for Facebook and its year-old video platform Watch. Barcroft is the founder and CEO of Barcroft Studios, the 16-year-old digital video publisher and producer known for award-winning factual channels on YouTube, Snapchat and Facebook, while Biddle – former director of strategic innovation for Twitter and editor at the BBC – is strategic partnerships manager for entertainment at Facebook.

Barcroft's relationship with the social media giant began several years ago when the business "took a punt" and started uploading original content to

Facebook, not expecting any financial return but looking instead to build an audience base. That audience is now well established, with Barcroft TV boasting more than 1.3m followers. The business recently scored its first Watch Original commission with *Incredible Homes*, which takes full advantage of Facebook's interactivity.

Sitting down at Facebook's Oxford Circus office to reflect on the evolution of Watch, Barcroft and Biddle take turns interviewing one another, discussing what creators need to know about leveraging video on Facebook; the difference between monetising video as a partner and producing Watch Originals; and how Ad Breaks can bring big money to the table.

Barcroft uploaded content to Facebook before there was a way to monetise it

SB: Can you explain how the Partnerships model works for producers interested in getting shows on Watch?

DB: The majority of content on Watch is there because you or anyone can upload video to Pages, as long as it's within Facebook's terms and guidelines. Secondly, you can also start to monetise it in an open platform, and when we reach a certain scale and ambition, we can work together in Partnerships to see how we can make that more effective as a viable business model through Ad Breaks or other formats and funding. Thirdly, you get to Originals, such as *Incredible Homes* and *Red Table Talk*, where we look at whether this is a real opportunity to make something unique that could only happen on Facebook, and therefore needs that little bit of ushering and care and higher level of partnership

SB: That's what I learned through the development process – that we had to bring something that could only exist on Facebook. The audience had to interact with that content on Facebook in a way they couldn't do with TV

DB: The approach to this versus the linear broadcast model is very different. And the platform is very different and the opportunities to interact are different

SB: Where is Facebook going with video? How will the interactivity evolve?

DB: With any new product launch or feature, you realise a lot of it is based on the idea that this is what users want and is based on user behaviour. You see that continue to develop on Facebook or Instagram, with features that lean into user behaviour

SB: So, the user experience is designed to increase interactivity and dwell times on Facebook platforms? Is that right?

DB: Yeah, to make it easier for people to find the video they love and easier to connect with the brands, whether it's directly speaking to talent, to other fans, or whether it's the brand itself having some interactions and engagements, whether through social features such as Watch parties, or polling, where you can get people's opinions and get them to engage

SB: If we're making a show for the BBC that is more linear-focused, we are making a 2D video file and delivering that with a few materials around the edges. Whereas with Facebook, there is opportunity to do much more with the types of tools that have been developed for multiple reasons and communities. We found that quite exciting, but it's also quite nerve-racking

DB: How does that interactivity change your production methods?

SB: When we made *Incredible Homes*, we were encouraged to work with the product team in San Francisco to work out which features of the social platform we could test and which we could integrate. The show amalgamated into a competition format between different people who were building remarkable places, so viewers could decide their favourite home out of each episode. We deployed polling as well as 360, and it was really fun to commission a show together that actually deliberately baked in that platform ability into the editorial. I suppose Charlie Brooker doing it with Netflix is another example of having that as an opportunity to innovate

DB: That's how we approach the Partnerships. Whether it's the Originals, where we would ferment innovation at a high level and experiment with formats that perhaps wouldn't be able to be made without that level of interaction and engagement from us, but also at the Partnerships level. There, we work on a day-to-day basis and can continue to support you, give you access to new features and talk about where we're working together well and what formats are working well

SB: How do you manage the expectations of partners?

DB: It's just a case of test and learn. Because of the analytics that go alongside Facebook video, you can look at where the loyalty is and where the returning views are. You can also look at CrowdTangle and see why something was engaged with more than another. Was it timing? Was it the sequence of events? Was it a zeitgeist moment? With all things, you catch lightning in a bottle sometimes and other times, it doesn't quite catch fire

"We're bringing a new dimension to storytelling and video that is generally very rewarding. But there are ups and downs and we learn all the time."

Dan Biddle



People watching at least a minute of Watch video every month



“We took a bet on the fact that Facebook, in the end, would turn advertising on and then split that money on partners, which it didn’t do for quite some time in all honesty. We were willing to take that risk.”

Sam Barcroft



\$10,000

Three times as many people make this amount a month on Watch over a year ago

SB: You’ve been partnering with various news organisations, such as the BBC, Channel 4 and *Le Monde*. Is that a model that has helped those businesses innovate? Is that something you’re doing to ensure there’s a spread of news opinion and fact on the platform?

DB: We’re working with them to find lots of different ways and models to inspire and ferment innovation and find what really works with a unique platform like Facebook for video. It’s allowed those broadcasters, news gatherers and producers to think differently and to use vertical video, think mobile first – truly mobile first – and think of content for that generation

SB: They’ll be going through the journey we went through as a producer-publisher over a number of years, which is realising the things that do really well on the platform and what does less well

DB: They want to experiment and find those audiences that are harder to reach on new devices and new places, and to tell stories that are apt and suitable for those devices and audiences and find new behaviours around video. We’re bringing a new dimension to storytelling and video that is generally very rewarding. But there are ups and downs and we learn all the time

DB: How does Barcroft approach developing IP, and how do you think about Facebook in that development process?

SB: Almost all of the original content we’ve put out exists based on our own investment, and that means we care deeply about the outcomes. If we spend tens of thousands of pounds on an episode of a show and it doesn’t rate, that’s a real issue for us. We have eight main shows on Facebook that return at least every week, so our approach is to build brands and franchises. The way we do that is to test a lot of different types of shows and double down on the ones that work and try a second episode around a certain subject area. Our shows are mainly short-form to medium-form doc episodes between 5-15 minutes long. We lean into repeat testing, so we schedule shows we know work really well as often as we can, and shows we want to develop, we spin off and try them out. If they work really well, we do more, and if they continue to work, we spin them into new shows

DB: How does our Ad Breaks programme and monetisation scale enable that?

SB: When we first did it, we took a punt by uploading original content into the Facebook system knowing



we wouldn’t make any money and essentially trying to build an audience base. We took a bet on the fact that Facebook, in the end, would turn advertising on and then split that money on partners, which it didn’t do for quite some time in all honesty. We were willing to take that risk

It paid off because when Facebook was assessing initial beta partners they wanted to have in Watch, they found there were a lot of original, high-quality episodes of shows that were already in the environment, with audiences that were already established on our Barcroft TV channel. Now, it’s a really important part of our income. And now that Facebook is selling advertising in more countries, our return on investment is improving

SB: With all the learnings Facebook has had in video over the last five years, where is this all heading? Are there trends people are going to double down on over the next few years?

DB: Video is a number of years old but Watch itself is only a year old internationally. We’re already seeing 720m people watching for at least a minute every month, and we have 140m watching for at least a minute every day. We have people who didn’t monetise video at all, and in the last year, they’ve seen three times growth on the platform. There are now three times as many people making \$10,000 a month out of Watch as were making that previously. It’s all progress. **TBI**



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Keeping ahead of a hungry pack

Netflix CEO Reed Hastings provided a US flavour to proceedings at a Royal Television Society Convention that felt something of a watershed

Netflix CEO Reed Hastings covered a fair bit of ground during his keynote speech at the Royal Television Society Convention in Cambridge in September, but the takeaway from his 30 minutes on stage for some seemed to boil down to just three words: “Whole New World.”

Hastings, who has built Netflix into a challenger for the globe’s biggest media companies over the past two decades, admitted that the launch of services such as Apple TV+, Disney+ and HBO Max would provide “tremendous competition” for his incumbent market leader and that, along with his three-word revelation, sent a shiver of panic through investors.

Netflix shares slipped by almost 6%, seemingly off the back of the comments, which on the face of it were

hardly ground-breaking. The TV industry has been awaiting the launch of US studio-backed streamers for some time now, as has Netflix, something the company’s CEO pointed out.

Yet they also highlighted the scale of the challenge Netflix faces over the coming years and reawakened concerns over how it might compete. One aspect will be through programme acquisitions, as shown by the company’s decision to fork out for veteran sitcom *Seinfeld*, rumoured to have topped \$500m for a five-year, global agreement.

Talking to TBI after the event, Hastings suggested the reasoning for the rich deal was pretty straightforward: “We are always trying to please our members,” he said, suggesting that he also expects more mega-bucks arrangements involving veteran shows.

The deal with Sony Pictures Television will see all nine seasons of *Seinfeld* launch on the platform from 2021, more than two decades since it first debuted on NBC in the US. While financial details have not been revealed, the five-year deal came on the back of

Netflix shares slumped after Reed Hastings said the streamer was facing “tremendous competition”

Netflix losing the rights to *Friends* to WarnerMedia's HBO Max offering and *The Office* to NBCUniversal's streamer Peacock.

When asked by TBI whether he expected more deals for such iconic IP from both Netflix and its rivals, Hastings remarked from behind a grin: "You could say that, but I couldn't possibly comment."

The implication was there and it goes some way to explaining Netflix's ongoing content strategy evolution that parries both acquisitions and originals. But further, where once it hoovered up endless reams of third-party content, it is now paying nine-figure sums for what might once have been seen more as catalogue material.

Clearly, as David Zaslav alluded to, there is a rush for cut-through, iconic content. But while Netflix seems keen to be involved, the Discovery boss was relaxed about letting the scripted-skewing streamers fight it out among themselves.

Talking of HBO Max's recent deal for exclusive rights to hit comedy *The Big Bang Theory*, Zaslav said the five-year agreement – reportedly costing between \$600m and more than \$1bn – suggested there was a rush for product.

"That deal says to me, holy shit, we're in trouble here," Zaslav said, adding that such deals imply companies "don't care what it costs" but just want acquisition execs "to go get it".

"That is not the business we are in," Zaslav continued, with his comments following similar deals that have seen the WarnerMedia streamer acquiring *Friends* for \$425m. The Discovery boss said that he wanted to keep Discovery's focus on its core interests

such as science, natural history and golf, adding that he was happy "to lean aside and let those [scripted] guys have their way with each other."

Channel 4 CEO Alex Mahon, meanwhile, drew attention to the "growing concentration of power" held by a few tech firms and streamers, and outgoing Ofcom chief Sharon White admitted SVOD regulation was on her mind. The BBC's director-general Tony Hall was also in town and told delegates that he wanted to turn iPlayer into "total TV" to compete with Netflix and new entrants including Apple.

"iPlayer is going to be total TV," Hall implored, "it will offer the very best of the BBC – all in one place – playing to our strengths: our liveness, the breadth of our genres and storytelling, the fact that we're both local – and global."

It will have some fight on its hands though, not least because Netflix is looking to ramp up its originals spend from £400m (\$500m) in 2019 with a "big increase" for 2020. That suggests we can expect to see plenty more series joining the streamer's current UK slate of 50 shows such as *Black Mirror*, *Sex Education* and *The Crown*, with its UK production hub at Shepperton Studios no doubt revving its engines on new programming already. While Hastings' "whole new world" reference might have sent shares down, it also perhaps reflects a company aware of its place in this new TV landscape.

"We said that eventually all these companies will go direct-to-consumer," the Netflix CEO added. "We've been preparing for this for a long time because we've known it's been coming." **TBI**



Clockwise: outgoing Ofcom boss Sharon White, Channel 4's Alex Mahon, BBC's Tony Hall, Discovery chief David Zaslav

And the CIA winners are...

The agenda-setter: Keli Lee

Few have had as much impact improving the diversity of a studio's content pipeline than Keli Lee, former ABC casting head and current MD of international content and talent for ABC Studios International, who has launched countless careers. Lee is this year's winner of the Contribution to Content Award

What inspired you to form the ABC Talent Showcase, now known as ABC Discovers, back in 2001?

My family immigrated to the US from South Korea when I was two years old. As an outsider trying to fit in and assimilate quickly, it wasn't until years later when I noticed that America had a great, diverse population but very little representation in TV and film. In 2001, it was hard not to notice this problem. But I could do something about it. In my position, I could create opportunities for diverse, inclusive talent and this representation of the communities we live in will deliver long-term business value.

Could you have predicted the success of the programme?

In 2001, it was the industry's first of its kind program which I created with the simple idea of finding, developing and casting diverse, inclusive talent to change the face of television, one face at a time. My team and I learned how to identify, train, develop and mentor the next generation of emerging actors, writers and directors – while also learning how to produce a live show. I'm so proud of the success of the talent who participated in our programs at early stages of their careers, including Gina Rodriguez of *Jane The Virgin*, Chadwick Boseman of Marvel's *Black Panther* and *12 Years A Slave's* Lupita Nyong'o.

What do you make of Hollywood's efforts to cast more diversely?

It's encouraging and I'm so proud that the commitment to diversity and inclusion comes from the very top of The Walt Disney Company and it's reflected in our movies and TV series. But I would love the day when we won't need to talk about diversity and inclusion because it will be part of our everyday experience in the industry.

How have you found the transition from a more domestic casting role to managing the studio's international efforts in programming?

Although I was based in LA, I've always been passionate about

not only finding diverse talent but also securing international talent such as Priyanka Chopra (India) for *Quantico* and Sofia Vergara (Colombia) for *Modern Family*. The transition to building the first international TV studio for The Walt Disney Company has been a challenging but fun and fulfilling ride.

What has been the most challenging aspect of building out the international pipeline?

Operating on all time zones. In three years, we've produced three series: *Harrow* (two seasons produced to date); *The Gloaming*, which just finished production and is going to market; and *Reef Break*, which finished airing on ABC in the US. Two new series are commissioned for 2020 and 33 projects are in development across Europe, Asia and Australia. There aren't enough hours in the day.

How have you sought to replicate the successful casting initiatives you founded in the US overseas?

My goal is to create the initiatives for writers, directors and actors in international markets, but since I had a big learning curve moving to London and starting the first international TV studio, I thought I should focus on one thing at a time, but that will be next.

Is there a particular project you're most proud of from international?

I'm proud of *Harrow*. It was our first international production and completed its second season. I've had a great experience working with our superstar Ioan Gruffudd, ABC Australia and *Hoodlum*. It's been a commercial success and critically acclaimed. I'm also proud of our new series *The Gloaming*, created by Vicki Madden.

What new opportunities are afforded to your team by the Disney/Fox merger?

The merger has created a number of opportunities and it will be exciting to see what comes next. **TBI**



The content visionary: Jane Millichip

Sky Studios COO Jane Millichip took Sky Vision revenues from £8m to £240m in seven years, creating a distribution powerhouse in the process. This year's winner of the Content Innovation Awards' Lifetime Achievement gong discusses *Bananas In Pyjamas*, *New Zealand Idol* and 'bespoke scale'

Before you started making news in the TV world you were writing about it, what made you make the jump?

I had just published an edition of the TV trade paper *TV World*, with *Bananas In Pyjamas* on the front cover. There may have been good reason for this peculiar editorial choice, I can't recall, but I'd gone into journalism to put the world to rights, to do a 'Woodward and Bernstein', so the sight of two anthropomorphic bananas wearing striped pyjamas sent me into an existential crisis. Also, I'd been in business journalism for about eight years by this point and I was starting to feel like a fraud – never having done any real business myself. So, when I was offered a job at ITEL (co-owned by ITV and HBO), I took it.

What did you learn in your first few roles in the business and how did they help you in what you do today?

Humility. I quickly learned respect for the talent and graft required to thrive in a sales environment. My colleagues at ITEL welcomed a slightly pompous journo into their midst and taught me the ropes without judgment (thank you Jane Dockery). After 20 years, these people are still close friends. From ITEL, I moved into commissioning, which gave me a much deeper understanding of the viewer and the B2C world of broadcasting. Guess what? We're not solely here to sate our creative juices, we're here to serve the viewing public. Around this time, I also realised that I rather enjoy being out of my comfort zone. That's when I headed to New Zealand to run a film and TV production company, where my comfort zone was somewhere over the horizon and I produced *New Zealand Idol*.

You oversaw a soaring business at Sky Vision, what were the key drivers of that growth?

A clear vision, amazing backing from Sky and the best team I could wish for. Sky gave us the commercial and creative freedom to evolve and shape the business as we saw fit. Consequently, we were not burdened by protocol or precedent. It sounds like an oxymoron, but Sky Vision was built on the notion of 'bespoke scale'. The other key

driver was our deficit-funding model at Sky, whereby Sky Vision was given the license to manage considerable risk in order to build the drama slate of high quality at pace.

Over the course of your career, which deal are you proudest of and why?

It's not a deal as such, but when I was a union rep for the National Union of Journalists at Haymarket Magazines in the early 90s, I was part the team that took London magazines on strike after our managements derecognised the union. It was scary as hell, as my career had only just begun. After senior managers at Haymarket referred to me in a memo as 'Jane Millitant', I assumed I was toast, but bizarrely, I received a promotion once the industrial action died down. A lesson in sticking to your principles.

How do you foresee distribution changing over the next three years?

The new big challenge for distributors will be the move by content creators to harvest their rights to feed their own streaming ambitions. But the fact remains, we still need the international market to enable us to maximise our IP. The way in which we do it may change, but if we are prepared to adapt, we will survive. Evolution is the key.

What show that you have worked on sticks in your memory and why?

Most Haunted was the first show I ever commissioned at Living TV in 2000. It was a ghost-hunting show that just seemed to catch the TV and public zeitgeist.

Tell us about a favourite memory from a TV-related event.

Banff Film and TV Festival in 1993. Standing on the edge of Lake Louise in Alberta, Canada, I remember pinching myself. Someone was paying for me to be there. I hope I never lose that sense of wonderment. **TBI**



And the CIA winners are...

Development dynamo: Izabela Ianelli

Endemol Shine Brazil's digital strategy manager Izabela Ianelli has worked in TV since 2010 and is winner of the Rising Star Of Development at this year's Content Innovation Awards. Her work on *MasterChef Brazil* has changed how YouTube users search for cooking content in the country

What do you enjoy most about working in development?

The possibility to turn great ideas into remarkable results and robust projects, changing the content perspective and creating new business models and content ecosystems, where the ideas turn into profitable business for platforms and ancillary products.

Tell us about some shows you have worked on that you are proudest of.

Our team put a great deal of effort into mapping how *MasterChef Brazil's* audience consumes online content and delivering a native content environment for the brand on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. This boosted profits from zero to almost the same budget that we got from the broadcaster that bought the show. I also need to highlight *Cabelo Pantene, O Reality*, an Endemol Shine Brasil format and the first branded content for Endemol Shine Group that travelled. I was part of the team who developed and managed the digital strategy for the first season, working closely with a marketing agency to develop content that brought brand values to the top while promoting the best user experience.

What single change would make the development process easier?

If digital producers could work alongside TV producers or agencies from the beginning of the development process, the storytelling that prolongs the lifetime of the show on digital platforms will be more attractive and stronger for the audience, as well as the brand.

The Brazilian market seems welcoming of new ideas, how do you find working in this territory?

It's amazing to work in a country known worldwide for its creativity and its new business models, for example such as we do with digital and brand-funded projects. The global market needs to see more of the amazing projects and cases that are being created in Brazil. A good idea can be created no matter the territory.



What opportunities does the shift to digital bring programme makers?

With digital, we can talk with a new audience in a whole new way. That's what we do on *MasterChef Brazil*. We have the brand on television, but if you are on a bus you can also be impacted by it on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram or Twitter. Our IP is everywhere as native content. We have memes, reaction content, tips and we don't cannibalize audiences, we create a new public face for the brand.

Tell us about some of changes you made to the *MasterChef* brand in Brazil that has helped the show grow.

Our team has been building the digital strategy for *MasterChef Brazil* since 2015. In the beginning, content was being displayed by fans of the show unofficially on all social media and it was securing millions of views and likes. We realised the importance of securing a new business model in partnership with the broadcasters (Band TV and Discovery Home&Health) and building an ecosystem on digital platforms. In 2016, the YouTube channel launched a few hours after the show was aired on TV.

After boosting the number of followers on social media using a strategy to promote the TV show, we developed an original and exclusive format for YouTube called *MasterChef Tips*. We also launched a *Best Moments Of MasterChef in Three Minutes* show, and developed a full weekly agenda for the YouTube channel with native content such as Q&As, lists and reaction pieces.

What is the single biggest way in which audience viewing habits are changing?

People use mobile and internet for everything. Brazil is the fourth biggest consumer of the internet in the world, there are more mobiles than habitants here. The global market - not just Brazil - must understand that content needs to be everywhere in a native context. **TBI**

TBI's Content Innovation Awards will take place on Sunday, 13 October at The Majestic Hotel, Cannes

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Inside the multimillion-dollar drama trap



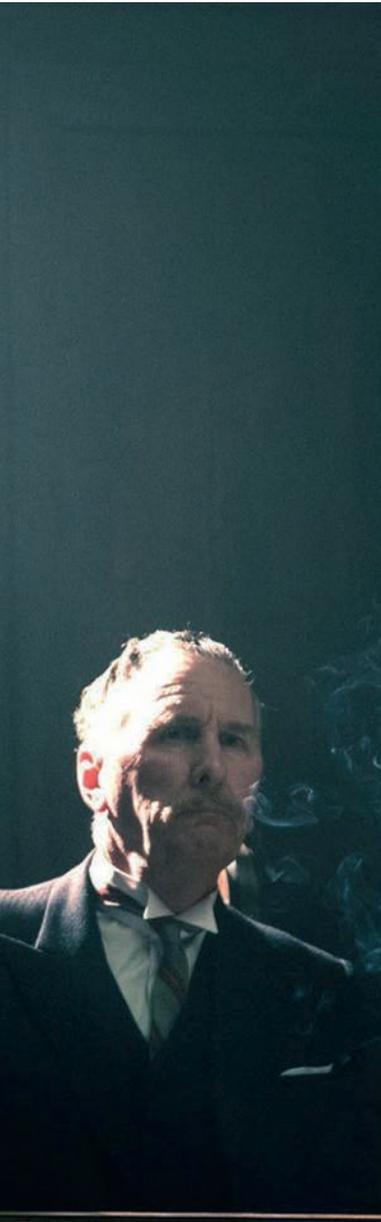
Producing high-end scripted product has never been more lucrative, nor more risky. Richard Middleton explores how producers and distributors are balancing their options

Netflix CEO Reed Hastings might have sent his company's share price down 6% last month when he alluded to the "whole new world" emerging in streaming, but a more populated SVOD universe is something scripted producers and distributors have been awaiting for some time.

Entrants such as Apple TV, Quibi and HBO Max are just three deep-pocketed entrants poised to join incumbents Amazon and Netflix in what is fast

becoming a crowded SVOD market, with scripted a key part of the play. And then there's the broadcasters, which are just about managing to keep pace in an increasingly pricey sector.

But unlike in the early days of SVOD, this growing gaggle of buyers have been shifting the tectonic plates of the global drama business by offering a variety of disparate models. While broadcasters by and large remain unable to shift their budgets, those making and selling the content are adapting accordingly with



The days of Netflix covering production costs plus 30% are “by and large gone” say some execs

drama financing models quickly changing as a result.

“Not long ago, the ideal template used to be getting a greenlight from your broadcaster, who would fund something in the region of around 70% of your budget,” reminisces Hakan Kousetta, COO at *State Of The Union* and *Top Of The Lake* prodco See-Saw Films.

“Then there’d be a tax credit of around 17-18% and then a distributor would offer 10-12% of your budget. And there it is, that’s your fully financed show.”

How times have changed. As streamers entered the market, costs began to skyrocket and broadcasters have struggled to keep up.

“Over the last few years, shows have almost doubled in price so it just doesn’t work anymore,” Kousetta continues. While you might be able to get the same subsidy – or more, if you pick the right country to produce in – broadcasters’ budgets have remained static, he says, meaning they tend to offer around 35% of a budget. “And that means you need another broadcaster.”

This is the path See-Saw has chosen for 10-part euthanasia drama *The End*, which is set in Australia and the UK. It will air on Fox Showcase on Foxtel in Australia and Sky Atlantic in the UK and Ireland, as well as on streaming service Now TV, with Endeavor selling globally.

“Most independent producers are finding that there are two ways to go in this market: you can get a global SVOD commission and that is then generally a single source of financing and can pay sufficiently to meet the rising costs of production and talent,” Kousetta says.

“The other is to get a non-SVOD commission but the challenge, as everyone knows, is they don’t have enough money to match what the SVOD pays. And that means for people like us, we have to look at co-commissions to secure sufficient funding to make the show at production level.”

It is a similar story from Caryn Mandabach, who says she left the US for the UK to gain greater ownership on shows. She now operates Caryn Mandabach Productions (CMP) and one of her standout series, *Peaky Blinders*, has become a hit for the BBC and Netflix, which offers it in the US.

The series is into its fifth season but Mandabach says surging costs are making life tough for broadcasters and producers alike. She admits the BBC in the UK is the “greatest platform if you can possibly afford it” but adds that the problem is “there are so many forces against you”. Central to these has been its inability to increase budgets and compete with US entrants.

Yet as Mandabach suggests, broadcasters can still offer a major platform for marketing a show and they

normally offer development funding too, something that Kousetta says is “crucial”.

“Most broadcasters are healthily funding development. They understand the value of that and it is a godsend in terms of getting shows away,” he adds. “It is a big risk to spend that sort of money – and we do it sometimes, we have to make that choice – but if a broadcaster likes your idea, the concept and the writer, then normally they will be happy to fund development.”

Mandabach and Kousetta both agree, however, that financing high end TV drama is now increasingly reminiscent of the way independent films are put together – and if it involves a broadcaster, the chances are that the deficit will be large.

To date, distributors have tended to step into the void and take increasingly big risks to ensure projects can get off the ground, as highlighted by Entertainment One’s president of international distribution Stuart Baxter, whose company sells shows such as ABC drama *The Rookie* and *Upright*, from Australia’s Lingo Pictures.

“Deficits are absolutely growing because the costs are escalating and the amounts being paid by broadcasters aren’t going up,” he explains.

“This has increased the need to find early partners for those more expensive pieces in the form of co-productions,” adds Cathy Payne, chief executive at Endemol Shine International, which has sold shows such as *Black Mirror* to Netflix. “Higher budgets also bring increased focus on extracting value from subsidy financing and cashflow facilities.”

Baxter says he breaks the current options to get shows off the ground into three categories. “There’s the model where you produce a show with low risk for a streamer or network [that takes all rights] such as we did with *Sharp Objects* and *Run* with HBO,” he says.

“We currently have other projects with Amazon and Apple with that model and it guarantees you revenue, a certain amount of profit and means everything is covered. It’s great but the upside on that project is capped and limited.”

Yet while Baxter admits it is good to have a smattering of such deals, he adds that he “wouldn’t personally want to have a production company that only had those types of shows on its book”. The days of Netflix covering production costs plus 30% are by and large gone.

“You get a small return but how do you cover development for other shows and your overhead costs?,” he continues. “You don’t. The model is great to have but it is only part of the formula”.

Model two involves a more traditional commissioner-led approach. “If we are really happy

“We did *Anna K* with HBO Max because we really love that project. WarnerMedia only wanted domestic US rights so we could keep international”

Stuart Baxter,
Entertainment One



with the size of the deficit – well, not happy, but if we accept that the risk and reward is in balance, even with a growing deficit – then we have two choices: either take it to market or do one or two presales which will mitigate that risk; or take it to a streamer, such as ITV Studios did when selling BBC drama *Bodyguard*.”

Then there is model three, “when we develop a show right from the beginning, creating the series, packaging it and generating scripts, securing talent and producers. And we obviously fully believe in those shows.” A commissioner is found and the product can then be sold globally or territory by territory, as happened with *Anna K*, which is with HBO Max.

“We did it with them because we really love that project,” Baxter continues. “We had offers from broadcasters and streamers but WarnerMedia only wanted domestic US rights so we could keep international and some of the upside. And that’s why we went with them.”

How that changes if and when HBOMax goes global remains to be seen, but it is clear that SVOD models are changing and there is no such thing as a typical deal. Some, such as Amazon Prime Video, are more open to regional co-productions for example and Payne says their approach to deal-making has “matured” in line with their offering.

“They are flexible in how they approach projects: they will have the bigger global properties that are clearly a global play, compared to other commissions that may be clearly more focused on how they perform in their domestic market.”

Regional SVODs are also offering opportunities: earlier this year, Kew Media Group struck a deal with Nordic-focused Viaplay to produce *Margeaux*, which

explores the 1972 Munich Olympics massacre from the points of view of an Israeli Mossad psychologist and the Palestinian coordinator behind the attack.

The show is ambitious – it has Adi Hasak attached to write and produce – but Kew’s EVP of global scripted series Carrie Stein says it makes sense financially.

“There are new models. With *Margeaux*, we are 50/50 partners and we are co-funding the series. It isn’t \$3m an episode, it’s more like \$1m partly because we’re shooting in Israel and Eastern Europe and we’ll follow the Israeli model for making their dramas a bit more.”

It’s not just that production costs less, though, Stein says. Rather, it’s a “well-oiled machine” that locks in scripts early and ensures actors are on set for less time by encouraging longer rehearsals. “Then when we are all on set they know exactly what they’re doing.” And partnering with Viaplay means Kew, which is selling the show globally, will also get back end.

“There are different models for different projects,” adds Kousetta, whose company has worked with all the major players in one form or another. “It really has evolved recently and they are all offering different structures. There is none of that cookie cutter-type of deal from the early days, it depends on the project and the longevity.

“There will be one deal for a single-run, closed ended series that is very different to something that could go and go. And then it is very different if you are bringing big talent to the table – you have the leverage there to get different structures.”

But there are also concerns that as the business becomes increasingly vertically integrated, the options for non-affiliated producers will be limited. With US studio-backed streamers striking overall deals and streamers increasingly look to tie up talent, too – recent examples including Netflix and Shonda Rhimes and Amazon and Phoebe Waller Bridge – some suggest the ecosystem could be closing in.

“There is this amazing vertical integration with content, telecom and tech companies,” says *Homeland* co-creator Howard Gordon, who recently agreed a deal with Sony Pictures Television, which has not yet entered the direct-to-consumer game. He highlights the “big grab for talent from those verticals” but also poses the question of “how many layers down” that goes.

“How long can a studio tie-up a low or mid-level writer and keep them from working on other things? Will there be a universe where Netflix has its five tiers of deals and you wear a Netflix jersey, or you wear an HBO Max jersey?” he questions.

The implications of this for producers and the

State Of The Union aired in August on BBC Two





HBO took global rights to one show *Sharp Objects*

“I know a few shows that should have done better but just didn’t. And it isn’t because the show is bad – it’s because if you’re a Northern European buyer, you now have 50 shows to choose from rather than five.”

Hakan Kousetta,
See-Saw Films



industry as a whole is clear but Baxter points back to the pre-streaming days, when networks were “incredibly” dominant. “They were vertically integrated too, they’d have their shows produced by their own studios but guess what, we were still making shows for ABC.”

Payne adds: “While the US studios will be focused on supplying their DTC streaming services, in particular for the first exclusive cycle/window, it is likely they will maintain a balanced production slate.

“The US studios have always been agnostic in that not all their output is exclusively for their own services. They will still apportion value to all forms of rights exploitation and will exploit rights outside of their OTT services during the life cycle of a property.”

And with numerous entrants set to storm the market, Baxter believes the drama business as it stands is sustainable for the next three years at least. Other execs, who did not want to be named in this feature, said the real impact would be on Netflix, which will be forced to further shift its strategy and its stance on rights as competition surges. Some suggested this increased flexibility has been a long time coming.

But while competition for product is growing, so are budgets and deficits on broadcaster-led projects. It is a point that Kousetta expands on, because as deficits increase for distributors, the options available to producers also change.

“The distribution model is very tough,” the See-Saw exec says. His company has eschewed any tie-ins with distributors to date, instead picking partners on a project-by-project basis, but he believes the days of increasing deficits will not continue.

“It will be hard for them to put up as much money

as they did in the past and that will be a reality in the next few years – there will be a cutting back on that,” he predicts.

Several execs, who also did not want to be named, are clear that they believe the sums do not add up and will cause serious problems soon because every deal is now based on a show going gangbusters, rather than simply selling well. Others privately admit that the sheer amount of content is posing problems for distributors, with companies burned after laying out healthy advances for shows that then failed to recoup the investment in sales.

Kousetta adds that he too has seen the distribution model creak under the strain of surging deficits, even though demand for shows is high.

“Yes, they are selling shows but some that they might have counted on selling really don’t do quite as well now as they should have done because there is so much more competition. The quality bar is going up and quite a few distributors have been caught out as significant advances have been put up but they haven’t made the returns that those advances should have justified.

“I know of a few shows where that has happened, where it should have done better, but it just didn’t. And it isn’t because the show is bad – it’s just because if you’re, say, a northern European buyer, you now have 50 shows to pick from rather than five. That is the reality.”

It is also partly why distributors have been taking stakes in production outfits, securing product and taking more back end, but like Kousetta, numerous execs in the scripted business TBI has spoken to think deficits have to stabilise or even decrease.

Payne says: “Our rule of thumb is that we require our primary commissioning broadcaster/platform to be locked before we secure the production deficit, in particular for larger-budget scripted.

“Any primary commissioning broadcaster/platform will want to be locked in early for a variety of editorial and business reasons – I don’t believe funding scripted deficits and then securing partners retrospectively is sustainable at all.”

But if distributors become averse to funding such large deficits, how will non-SVOD shows get made? Some suggest the slack will be taken up by media-focused finance houses, a view Kousetta subscribes to – but there will be costs attached.

“The prospects for producers not being commissioned by SVODs is increased cost. It means more financing, which means more financing costs, and that equals less profitability. But that is definitely not the end of the world – it’s just a change in the shape of the business.” **TBI**

Duking it out with global drama

A+E Networks International's soon-to-launch series *Miss Scarlet And The Duke* is not your typical period drama, but then neither is the way it's been produced. Richard Middleton reports



Miss Scarlet And The Duke has no commissioning broadcaster

Demand for original scripted series has driven a proliferation of product on screen over recent years but also a huge shift in the way shows are made.

While SVODs might have fuelled the boom, broadcasters and studios have quickly adapted to new ways of working as the market develops at pace and creatives have become increasingly empowered. Take A+E Networks International: earlier this year, the company greenlit its first scripted co-production, without a traditional commissioner on board.

Miss Scarlet And The Duke is a 6 x 60-minute crime drama centered on the first female detective in 19th-century London. Created by *Grantchester* writer Rachael New, who is also attached as showrunner, the show stars *Peaky Blinders* actor

Kate Phillips as detective Eliza Scarlet, with the story delving into her father's private detective agency and the murky world of policing at the latter end of the 19th century.

But despite the time period, it tackles an array of contemporary issues and errs away from the more traditional aspects of a period drama.

"Essentially, I wanted to write a female Sherlock Holmes," says the personable New, who speaks to TBI as the show's frenetic production schedule powers forward while on location at a grand country house south of Dublin, Ireland. The project has been produced by Element 8 Entertainment's team including Patty Ishimoto, Todd Berger of *Bandidos Yanquis* and 87 Films' Patrick Irwin, while Ireland's ShinAwiL has overseen production in Dublin.

”There is one Victorian detective who everyone knows, which is Holmes, and I wanted to give a different version. Holmes is a superhero; I wanted to write a character who was flawed, a bit more human and more relatable. And in particular, a woman.”

New adds that while Sherlock is known for his brilliance, Eliza Scarlet “has to prove herself a hell of a lot more just to gain respect. This is set in 1882, when women had very few rights. This woman is in a man’s world, she is the engine of the show and I thought it is a great time to tell this story.”

The show is not, however, a response to the Me Too movement, New says, adding that she had started writing the series before it began. “I didn’t want to tick any boxes, what you see really is what was written and it hasn’t been influenced [by Me Too]. Lots of drama now seems to be wish fulfilment and it can feel a bit forced.

“Now you have meetings with broadcasters and producers, talking about ideas and everyone in power has to be a woman. It’s just not the reality, you feel like it is going too much the other way. If everyone watches TV and thinks we’re sorted, we have women in positions of authority, then it kind of devalues it, because obviously that is not the case.”

Yet the show does tap into timely themes, albeit perhaps from a less engineered perspective.

“Eliza is the first female detective,” New says. “Her father was a private detective but died and left her penniless. So her only option for financial security is to marry someone she doesn’t love [Rupert Parker, played by Andrew Gower] or pay her own way.”

She decides on the latter path, using her sex to remain “invisible,” as New puts it, in a world still dominated by men while using her “emotional intelligence,” her smarts and her “forensic mind” to compete.

New says the show “rocks along” and readily admits that it is aimed at viewers who might not necessarily watch period dramas. And she is clear that the way the series will look on screen has been largely driven by those behind the camera, rather than those behind the pay cheque for the series.

“Creative has been at the core of this and that is quite unusual in lots of projects,” continues New, who has previously worked on forthcoming BBC drama *The Mallorca Files* and Sky comedy *Trollied*. She adds that “everyone has had their eye” on the show – in a positive way – which has been one reason why it has managed to attract talent such as Phillips, who stars as Miss Scarlett. Elsewhere, Stewart Martin plays the formidable Duke, part-love interest part-domineering male, while Gower is Rupert, Eliza’s potential suitor who has an overbearing mother.

The freedom given to creative has also been possible because A+E is the central company on the series, funding it up front on the hope that the show will then resonate and sell globally, allowing it to recoup its investment and some. To date, deals have been struck with PBS in the US and UKTV, with others – essentially pre-sales agreements – including CBC in Canada, Seven Network in Australia and Lightbox in New Zealand on board, too.

“We have done it in a very different way,” explains Richard Tulk-Hart, MD of international content sales and co-productions for A+E Networks International. “We were asked to take it down the commissioning road but we decided not to because of the length of time that would take.

“So we have no one commissioning broadcaster, which is a very different way of doing things and ultimately, it has allowed for this creative freedom.”

In place of the traditional lead broadcaster has been A+E, which Tulk-Hart describes as a “big financing partner” that allows “people like Rachael to do what they do best.” He stops momentarily, before adding: “Within boundaries.”

“Without the commissioning broadcaster in the traditional sense, the voice of the creative is much louder from the A+E side as well as from Rachael,” Tulk-Hart continues. “And it’s not true that the broadcasters don’t have any voice. We of course listen to our major networks – they read the scripts and see the dailies.

“But it is a lighter touch and therefore there are lighter notes and it becomes our show. It is great in one sense, scary in another,” he says, admitting, however, that the entry of PBS and UKTV, and

“We have no one commissioning broadcaster, which is very different.”

Richard Tulk-Hart,
A+E



Grantchester writer Rachael New was involved in all aspects of production



discussion of primetime slots, suggested the project was on the right tracks.

New has also been empowered by the production allowing her to take on a US-style showrunner role, again providing her with more control over the look and feel of the series.

“My take on the showrunner role was in simplistic terms – the US guys see it very differently and because it was Element 8 who championed the project and took it on, it was very clear they wanted a US version of the showrunner,” she explains.

“That was music to my ears of course, because what writer wouldn’t want their fingers in every part of the pie. And they have been completely true to their word; they have completely bought into that from the get-go. I have been involved in pretty much everything,” she says, from location and casting to set design.

Working with her has been director Declan O’Dwyer, who has been key to ensuring the show captures the period but also welcomes viewers in who might not be typical costume drama fans.

“For people who wouldn’t necessarily watch costume drama it has that nice modern take,” he explains while on set, surrounded by countless monitors, booms and cameras. Eliza, he adds, is not a superhero and the show is not an action series, rather one based around circumstance. “But there is a lot of sparring,” he adds, “the story is constantly moving forward.”

For Phillips, the allure for taking the show on is clear. “The opening title sequence is so punchy, it’s not really like anything I’d seen before when reading,” she says, dressed in a turn-of-the-century outfit inbetween takes on a warm summer’s day in Ireland.

“I was within two or three pages of the script, and I’d never really met a character like her before. She is dynamic, and as we find out, she’s quite different with each person she meets. This has been the most exciting job from the beginning, and it has turned out to be the best job.”

That is, of course, not the same as an easy job and Phillips admits the cast has been “working at a pace”. She adds: “There’s not much time to rehearse but it is easy – we do a line run, quick rehearsal and then the scenes are so beautifully crafted that they flow beautifully, too.”

Whatever way you cut it, though, *Miss Scarlett And The Duke* is a risky proposition in a market swimming in new scripted content fighting for attention. Tulk-Hart says his division has almost 100 shows on the slate in one form or another, but he only envisages three or four shows emerging each year.

For Patrick Vien, group MD of international at

“Many players want financial models that are manageable, and that is what we have.”

Patrick Vien,
A+E Networks
International



A+E, *Miss Scarlet* represents a chance for both his company and other broadcasters looking to tap into the world of buzzy scripted product.

“[Competing] with super funded shows like *Game Of Thrones*-level productions, we see a wonderful opportunity to create very strong, cinematically attractive work in scripted that also fits into the realm of mainstream TV.”

He describes the series as “premium mainstream, inspired by what is expected from TV today but attractive to a broad audience” and differentiates his product from shows on the drama-rich environments of the streamers.

“The fact is a lot of those super shows fit onto platforms that are in fact more niche. Distribution has us in touch with broadcasters worldwide and they are all hankering for a model like this. We can find writers, we can put together the package and our US side can bring a lot of resource and experience too.

“The cost of scripted has exploded to such a level for those who are funding it, for different reasons. But many players in the market want financial models that are manageable and that is what we have,” Vien adds, highlighting *Miss Scarlet* on the scripted side and one of A+E’s other plays, Damian Lewis-fronted *Spy Wars*, on the unscripted front.

“It is part of our plan to play more ambitiously outside of the US,” he continues, adding that he still works closely with US-based A+E Studios to take series commissioned Stateside out to the world, where applicable. He also downplays the model of *Miss Scarlet*, adding that the company “hasn’t really reinvented the wheel.” It is rather just “the model of independent film-making – and we are just applying that to TV”.

For New, Phillips and the rest of the cast and crew, the model seems to be working. Further sales to broadcasters are in the works but Tulk-Hart says the company has largely “held back” over recent months, almost re-appraising the work of the past year or so. “We know we have something very special and when you get that you hold on to it and go about it in a more measured manner. To have this as the first big show in our new co-production space... it’s great, you don’t expect it.” At present, the gamble seems to be paying off. **TBI**



Peaky Blinders actress Kate Phillips is detective Eliza Scarlet

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MURINO

Thierry
GODARD

Mathilde
SEIGNER

Stanley
WEBER

Jenifer
BARTOLI

Grégory
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When writers revolt

Creative talent might be in demand but recognition and recompense remains an issue for writers from LA to Berlin. Richard Middleton catches up with developments at the Oslo Showrunners Summit in Norway



Talented writers are in demand around the world but you might not have guessed it from the way they have been treated in Germany over recent years.

The issue came to a head last year when screenwriters and the TV industry as a whole came together to show their outrage at the German

Television Awards, known as the Einladung des Deutschen Fernsehpreises (DFP).

Screenwriter Kristin Derfler's two-part drama *Brüder*, commissioned by national broadcaster ARD, had been a hit and secured a nomination at the DFP. But although she wrote the script for the show, she was not invited to the ceremony by the awards organisers.

"It was literally that they wanted to have more celebrities and fewer people who accept the awards – it was deemed that the writers were people who were not needed," says Tillman Roth, who has been behind shows such as *Five 2 Twelve* and has several series in the works with German outfits.

For Derfler and her colleagues, the situation simply underlined the longstanding lack of recognition given to writers across the German TV drama business. And such was the furore, they set up Kontrakt '18, which has since transformed how the local scripted business is operating.

Derfler teamed up with a trio of acclaimed writers including Anette Hess, who worked on shows such as *Ku'damm 56*, and Volker Zahn and Orkun Ertener to create the framework contract, which they said they would abide by to secure recognition for their work.

"In a modern world, we have to tell more complex and modern stories. It's a matter of survival for everyone – not just screenwriters."

Tillman Roth
Screenwriter



Kontrakt '18 manifesto

Point 1:

The author is responsible for the script until the final version, unless otherwise agreed in writing.

Point 2:

The author has a say in the selection of the director. The decision will be made by mutual agreement.

Point 3:

The author is invited to table reads with the actors.

Point 4:

The author is granted the right to see and comment on the dailies as they come in and on the rough cut at the earliest opportunity. The author is invited to internal screenings or rough cut presentations with the network.

Point 5:

The author is mentioned by name in all communication materials about the project (press releases, programme notes, posters, etc.) and invited to all project-related public events.

Point 6:

The signatories undertake to accept orders for script revisions to another author's project (rewriting, polishing, etc) only if they have previously agreed the author who is leaving the project.

Kontrakt '18 has been signed by around 250 of the country's top writers

From there, the idea snowballed and today, 18 months later, Kontrakt '18 has been signed by around 250 of the country's top writers. The declaration is intended to introduce contractual and behavioural standards that local writers argue have become a matter of course in other countries. And those signing the contract have promised not to enter into contractual negotiations unless the six-point manifesto is abided by.

For Roth and other German screenwriters, the action is revolutionising the country's TV drama business. "This has shaken up the whole industry," he says. "If you ask a Danish or American or English writer, they would say of course there is a common understanding but in Germany it isn't understood that as a writer you should get invited to table reads, for example.

"If you want to visit the set you should be able to or if you want to give feedback you should – and you shouldn't be able to be just kicked out for no reason on shows. These are all things we have fought for."

It is also reflective of an industry in flux. German dramas have started travelling over recent years, with series such as *Dark* on Netflix and the *Deutschland* franchise on Amazon taking the country's scripted product global, but Roth says the business still has some way to go.

Writers rooms, for example, are regularly discussed but rarely implemented, he says. "What helps is the big production companies are providing development

"At its best, a writers room becomes like a band where the sound is greater than the sum of its parts"

Howard Gordon
Homeland co-creator



Dark (top) and *Brüder*



money much more now than maybe a year or two ago, so writers can meet for a week and flesh out ideas.

"That isn't a writers room as such – it is a writers session – but these influences are trickling into Germany," he continues, adding that writers such as Joerg and Anna Winger, who were behind *Deutschland* 83, 86 and 89, have introduced the US practice. The latter is also a signatory to Kontrakt '18.

But Roth adds that the German business remains years behind the US, where shows have numerous scribes working on ideas together, normally led by a showrunner. The role has morphed into various guises, a point alluded to by Caryn Mandabach, CEO of *Nurse Jackie* prodco Caryn Mandabach Productions. For *Homeland* and *24* showrunner Howard Gordon, who was speaking alongside Mandabach in Oslo, it should be like "being a band leader".

"You put everything together and hopefully bring in the right percussionist at the right time. At its best, a writers room becomes like a band where the sound is bigger and better, greater than the sum of its parts."

That's not to say it always works, Gordon admits, before adding that the nature of the industry is also influencing the way shows are being written Stateside. "The way we write TV is affected by how we watch it, or whatever we call that now," he says. "We all consume and binge. Even the idea of bingeing is a disgusting term. Who wants to eat a meal and binge it?"

"You want to have a table set for you, be hungry, have an appetite and anticipate it. You want to pick from the menu, then when it's over, you want to digest it and look forward to the next meal – not just see what's next and shovel it in. That's not a small thing."

He also admits that the "land grab" for talent suggests US studios and streamers will increasingly produce for their own vertically integrated outlets, something that is affecting writers affiliated to certain projects or companies. And like their German counterparts, US writers are also in the midst of attempting to re-assert themselves in the ongoing battle involving the Writers Guild Of America, which is looking to do away with agency packaging deals, something the US Association of Talent Agencies is loath to do.

Over in Germany, those behind Kontrakt '18 have already met with local agents, agreeing to forge closer ties. But for Roth, there is an urgency to modernise – both in recognising screenwriters but also introducing concepts such as the writers room – simply in order to keep up with the rapidly changing scripted ecosystem.

"We definitely aspire to using writers rooms because the media world is changing so radically that we can't tell the stories as we did back in the day, when we had to choose from three terrestrial broadcasters. There is no other way but to change." **TBI**

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Austen untold

Andrew Davies, the prolific writer behind countless adaptations of beloved classics, tells Tim Dams about filling in gaps and taking controlled liberties with Jane Austen's unfinished novel *Sanditon*

Andrew Davies is widely acknowledged as the go-to man for adaptations of classic novels, with credits ranging from *Pride And Prejudice* through to *War And Peace*, *Middlemarch* and *Les Misérables*.

Yet 83-year-old Davies had his work cut out for *Sanditon*, Jane Austen's unfinished final novel. Austen completed only 11 chapters before her death in 1817 – just enough story for half of the first episode of Davies' eight-part ITV adaptation.

"Part of the reason I do so many adaptations is that actually making up the plot is not one of my strong points as a writer," admits Davies. "I was just

wondering, would I be able to think up enough?"

This is an issue because in her 11 chapters, Austen did little more than set the scene for her book – merely introducing her characters and its setting. At its heart is entrepreneur Tom Parker, who is planning to develop a fishing village, Sanditon, into a fashionable seaside resort; young Charlotte Heywood, who embarks on a journey from the only home she has known to Sanditon; Tom's handsome and forthright brother Sidney Parker; the miserly Lady Denham, on whose fortune the Sanditon project relies; a cast of relatives hoping to inherit Lady Denham's money; and a wealthy mixed race heiress from the West Indies.

Sanditon has grabbed headlines in the UK for some racy scenes

Davies was brought the project by Red Planet, the production company best known for long-running hit *Lost In Paradise*. Around the bicentenary of Austen's death, Red Planet was brainstorming how it might create a new Austen project for television.

"We saw this book," recalls joint MD Belinda Campbell. "If you are going to take on Jane Austen, there is only one person you can approach who is confident enough to take on her work and continue it."

Davies says he was "blown away" at the opportunity: "I was aware of *Sanditon*, but I had never really considered it before. I just saw such fresh things about it: the setting at the seaside and the fact that those Parker brothers were not like Austen's usual gentleman heroes."

The Parker brothers, he notes, have put all their efforts into being businessmen rather than country gentlemen on their estates. They borrow huge sums of money to try to turn Sanditon into a fashionable resort, going out of their way to attract celebrities and influencers of the day to help spread the word.

"It all felt rather modern and exciting," says Davies. "Plus there is Austen's first black character, Miss Lamb, the heiress from the West Indies."

Campbell says there are other differences about *Sanditon*, too. Unlike Austen's previous books, it was written after the Napoleonic War, which had ended in 1815 with the battle of Waterloo. "This is a slightly different time," says Campbell. "Britain has won the war, there is a confidence in the air, you have the new industrial age, the gentry are waning in importance, and there is this idea of entrepreneurialism and that the aristocracy are not necessarily the only game in town anymore."

To build out Austen's original story, Davies worked with Campbell and the Red Planet development team to create an outline for the eight-part series.

"Luckily, I didn't have to do it on my own," recalls Davies. "They are very bright. We just had a lot of fun thinking about what could happen. We'd sit around a table, or we'd go to the pub and have lunch. It was a continuing series of conversations."

Campbell also speaks highly of the development process, saying Davies is "incredibly collaborative and absolutely knows what he wants something to be". Davies wrote the first three as well as the final episode, while three were written by Justin Young and one by Andrea Gibb.

As Austen only had time to introduce her characters, Campbell says it was key to develop the relationships between them so that it "feels real and authentic very, very quickly".

However, the plan was never to write something



"Part of the reason I do so many adaptations is that actually making up the plot is not one of my strong points as a writer."

Andrew Davies

entirely in the style of Austen. Even though Campbell says the adaptation is guided by her themes, tropes and values, "we attempted to do something a bit different with this, so it doesn't feel like a re-run of her greatest hits, but brought something new and surprising as well".

Reviewers have, it seems, tended to agree that there is something different about this adaptation of *Sanditon*.

Sexed up? Not quite

"A sexed-up take on Jane Austen's unfinished novel" was the headline in *The Financial Times*, while *Radio Times* published a story titled "Jane Austen fans shocked by *Sanditon* sex scene".

Episode one does indeed contain a surprise clinch in the woods between two characters – Sir Edward Denham and Clara Brereton – witnessed by Charlotte, while some of the lead male characters take a naked dip in the sea.

Davies, who is famous for including the scene of

Colin Firth emerging with a wet shirt from the lake in BBC One's *Pride And Prejudice*, explains these additions by saying he never wanted to write a slavish imitation of Austen.

He points out that he has been "filling in the gaps" of Austen's novels ever since he started adapting them, noting that she would only write about what she knew, and would never write a scene, for example, where a man is on his own or two men are together.

Davies also explains that the period towards the end of her life was "one of the most licentious periods in remembered history."

"It was an extraordinarily free and bold time. We get hints of that in her novels. She never writes scenes of a seduction or a sexual encounter, but there are lots of girls getting seduced off stage in Austen's books if you read them carefully."

Campbell adds that the scene is not just included for sensation or titillation, but for authentic and genuine reasons. "They do have a clandestine meeting in the book. Obviously Andrew took that a bit further, but the reason for doing so is that in the book it is very clear that Edward's intention is to seduce and ruin her."

As for the skinny dipping, Davies says that sea bathing was very popular at that time. Women would have to swim wearing elaborate costumes, whereas men could take a dip completely "starkers" at the other end of the beach.

"If you are going to take on Jane Austen, there is only one person you can approach who is confident enough to take on her work and continue."

Belinda Campbell
Red Planet



"Also, we'd got a fine cast of blokes acting in this, so I thought we should take advantage of this for the benefit of the female viewers, and for those male viewers..." he jokes, tailing off the sentence by adding, "I shouldn't really be saying all this."

Asked what she thinks about the press focus on the raciness of this adaptation, which in reality is much less than is made out in the media, Campbell says: "You've got to live by the mantra that there is no such thing as bad publicity... But I don't want people to think that this is just a sexed-up Austen, because it is in very short supply really."

For Davies, *Sanditon* "combines a love story, a business story and all those things that people love about costume dramas – the costumes themselves, the lovely buildings and the scenery".

Indeed, there are many classic elements to this adaptation, from the lavish balls and beautiful production design, right through to the fact that, like all Austen books, it really is a Cinderella story at heart – the tale of a young girl growing into adulthood and finding love.

For all his prolific output, Davies says it takes him roughly four weeks to write an episode of drama – and explains that he keeps a regular schedule to keep on top of the work.

"I'm better in the morning than in the afternoon. I keep office hours, or try to. I like to get started by nine in the morning, and find I'm tailing off by four in the afternoon." He thinks it is a habit that started 70 years ago when he was at school.

He began working on *Sanditon* just as he was finishing off his BBC One adaptation of Victor Hugo's classic novel *Les Misérables*.

Since then, he's finished an adaption of Vikram Seth's India-set epic *A Suitable Boy*, which has just started filming. It's a big story, but one that has a Jane Austen-like tale at its centre, notes Davies, about a young girl at university whose mother is determined to see her married as soon as possible.

And now Davies is working on a similarly epic project – an adaptation of John Updike's four *Rabbit* novels for producer Lookout Point, whom he worked with on *Les Misérables*. The plan, he says, is to create a 12-part series, or three parts to each *Rabbit* novel. No broadcaster is yet attached. Davies says that, "touch wood", there is a brilliant American female director who is "very interested", although no contract has yet been signed.

He's also hopeful that ITV will commission a second season of *Sanditon*, allowing him to develop the story further. "It's all very exciting, I'm not sure how I'm going to juggle my time between the two of them. But that is a very nice problem to have." **TBI**



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Sally Forever

British writer-director Sally Wainwright, creator of *Happy Valley* and *Gentleman Jack*, is one of the few creative talents who can pursue whatever projects she likes. But as she tells Manori Ravindran, you can't afford to be too complacent in this industry

Sally Wainwright, one of the UK's pre-eminent writers, will be thinking long and hard before sliding into a pair of golden handcuffs proffered by the streaming giants.

The writer behind the likes of BBC One's *Happy Valley* and *Last Tango In Halifax*, ITV's *Scott and Bailey*, and most recently, BBC One's *Gentleman Jack*,

is used to being in control, working at her own pace and, frankly, for whomever she likes. A lucrative deal that requires her to work exclusively for one partner is looked upon with some uneasiness.

You can understand why. The BBC Studios-distributed crime thriller *Happy Valley* is consistently cited by myriad TV execs as proof that domestic,

“It’s possible I’m too possessive and close to the material, but there is much detail that gets missed by other people. It may say more about me than it does about them, but it’s difficult. I personally find it difficult to hand my work to other people.”

Sally Wainwright



gritty drama can travel to broadcasters and platforms around the world, while her latest venture, the Suranne Jones-fronted *Gentleman Jack* marked her first co-production with HBO.

Is a dalliance with a player such as Netflix, which has enlisted Shonda Rhimes and Ryan Murphy in headline-grabbing deals for absurd money, on the cards? She’s open to it – Netflix, after all, picked up *Happy Valley* for international and will likely be on board the planned third season she is writing after the second season of *Gentleman Jack* – but with caveats.

“It depends what they would be expecting in return,” Wainwright tells TBI.

“I’ve worked in a traditionally British way in that I write all my own episodes and I direct as many as I can. The US model is different in that once you become a showrunner, you tend to hand your episodes to other people to write and you oversee them, and there just isn’t as much time for you to be involved in writing or directing.”

TBI understands that Wainwright may be locked into a deal with a major distributor, though she won’t be drawn. It’s clear that the pact allows her the flexibility and involvement she needs – one that wouldn’t necessarily come to pass with an SVOD.

Indeed, Wainwright isn’t as clued up about the digital disruption of the British broadcasting landscape as one might expect.

For example, speaking to TBI at the Série Series drama festival in Fontainebleau in July, she didn’t realise that Sky’s former head of drama Anne Mensah had made the move to Netflix earlier this year, though she remained relatively unperturbed by the development.

Might it make the platform more accessible to her in a sense? “I guess it would,” she shrugs.

What has her particularly enthusiastic, though, is HBO’s involvement in *Gentleman Jack* – a historical drama she based on the partially coded diaries of 19th-century British landowner and businesswoman Anne Lister, who was open about her relationships with women.

Wainwright breathlessly describes the Lookout Point-produced drama, which marked the first proper collaboration with a US partner for any of her projects, as “really faultless”, praising HBO execs Francesca Orsi and Kathleen McCaffrey and describing the cable channel’s approach as “supportive without being too intrusive”. The same goes for the BBC, she adds quickly.

“What’s exciting about HBO is that you feel you’re in very good company because they’re very prestigious, and you know when they give you notes that you have to listen to them, but you know they won’t give you notes that are unnecessary.”

The “healthy” budget, too, has enabled Wainwright to flex her directing muscles – a skill she speaks passionately about honing since first directing episodes of *Happy Valley* and then her one-off BBC drama on the Brönte sisters, *To Walk Invisible*.

“What’s wonderful for me is that *Gentleman Jack* looks cinematic,” she says, noting that she directed four of its eight episodes.

Wainwright is determined to do more in the director’s seat. Now she’s started, she finds it “even harder” to hand those particular reins to someone else.

She admits, however, that “it would be hard to direct a nine-part series or more,” adding that *Gentleman Jack* was a two-and-a-half-year process at the end of which she was “absolutely shattered” and drained “physically and mentally”.

Women behind the lens

The experience was testing, too, for other reasons. Wainwright was proactive in trying to get more women alongside her behind the camera on *Gentleman Jack*, but the reality of such an endeavour was, she discovered, not straightforward.

“The conversation around female directors is changing, but I’m not sure the reality is changing that much,” she says. “It was hard [to get female directors]

Gentleman Jack is the first US creative collaboration for any of her projects

Happy Valley will return for a third season produced by Lookout Point



“What’s exciting about HBO is that you feel you’re in very good company because they’re very prestigious, and you know when they give you notes that you have to listen to them, but you know they won’t give you notes that are unnecessary.”

involved because, instantly, the pool you can choose from is much smaller.

“I did interview some men, but I made that conscious choice I was going to employ women, and it wasn’t as positive an experience as I thought it would be.”

Pressed on what aspects, exactly, were challenging for Wainwright, she is the first to admit with a wry smile that she is “a perfectionist and obsessive”.

“It’s possible I’m too possessive and close to the material, but there is much detail that gets missed by other people. It may say more about me than it does about them, but it’s difficult. I personally find it difficult to hand my work to other people. I’ve always wanted to direct my own work.”

Here, Wainwright references *Line Of Duty* writer and showrunner Jed Mercurio, who had invited her to France for an on-stage interview during *Série Series*.

“Jed says he’s very calm when he hands [his work] over and people don’t do what he wants. I’m not – I get very angry and upset. That’s not good for anybody.”

However, she is adamant that this won’t put her off from working with other female directors. Wainwright is also keen to get more female directors of photography involved in her projects, citing a plan to do more with the British collective of female cinematographers *Illuminatrix*.

Going forward, Wainwright has another season of *Last Tango In Halifax* in the works and a third helping of *Happy Valley* planned, albeit with Lookout Point rather than her long-time production partners Red – a departure that comes as a result of a falling-out with Red boss and Studiocanal UK CEO Nicola Shindler.

She is also keen to pitch yet another project about a risk-taking female protagonist – British pilot Amy

Johnson, the first aviator to fly solo from England to Australia in 1930. Initially imagined as a film, Wainwright is now considering a multi-part series.

She is clear, though, that despite the global resonance of her work and the freedom to write and direct most anything she desires, she continues to doggedly follow her instincts, and take little for granted in this business.

“My guide is my instincts,” she says earnestly. “On the whole, they’ve been fine. I know specifically when it has gone wrong and it’s when I listened to other people instead of my own instincts.”

There is a pressure, still, over when a programme does as well as *Happy Valley*, which helped to launch the careers of actors such as James Norton and Sarah Lancashire and won numerous BAFTA Awards.

“There is a worry that you then do another series and everyone goes, ‘Well that wasn’t as good.’ You see shows all the time that are written by good people and it just didn’t work. And I’ve had shows that didn’t work.

“You never get complacent,” she admits. “You always think the next one will always be the one that flops.” **TBI**

FILMOGRAPHY

Emmerdale (1991)
Coronation Street (1996-1998)
Jane Hall (2006)
The Amazing Mrs. Pritchard (2006)
Scott & Bailey (2011-2016)
Happy Valley (2014-2016)
Gentleman Jack (2019)
Last Tango In Halifax (2012-2020)

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Expanded thinking

Globo has sunk \$50m into a sprawling new studio complex to produce more drama and expand its global reach, but don't expect streamer collaborations any time soon, writes Richard Middleton

Globo's huge studios in Rio de Janeiro are, on the surface, just as you might expect them to be: palm trees sway in the warm breeze, golf carts ferry execs and talent to shoots, and all manner of costumes and cameras are being readied for filming.

Delve deeper, though, and the Brazilian media giant's studio complex – complete with a new R\$200m (\$50m) expansion launched this summer - reflects how fundamental changes are impacting the Latin American TV business.

The three new studios, known collectively as MG4, total 4,500 square meters and each can fit a jumbo jet

Senior Globo execs formally opened the expanded studio in August

inside. They are also part of Globo's strategy to expand its drama output and improve the quality of its series against rising competition from streamers such as Netflix.

Each studio has been kitted out with the latest equipment with an express interest in ensuring its scripted product, namely telenovelas, can be produced as efficiently and quickly as possible. That will, in turn, free up studio space elsewhere on the lot, enabling around 70 scripted series to be created each year, delivering a more varied diet of drama to the company's viewers.

Globo Network CEO Carlos Schroder says the

expanded slate, facilitated by the new studio, is a response to a rapidly changing TV landscape in Latin America and the surging popularity of largely US-based entrants that have become popular with local audiences.

Despite the competition, Schroder is bullish about the Brazilian broadcaster's prospects. "This world is really opening up and it allows us to experiment," he says, adding that the expanded complex will produce series for its free-to-air networks, as well as its Globosat pay offering and its SVOD service GloboPlay.

The latter has become a key part of Globo's strategy to not just compete with streamers and the likes of YouTube, but to learn more about their own viewers and tailor their offerings accordingly. It has also signalled the growing importance of OTT by launching a raft of new shows that have premiered on the service, which is ad-funded or available for \$5 a month commercial free.

"We want to understand the different social tribes we have. It is a huge challenge, but we are investing more in content and will spend R\$4.2bn (\$1.1bn) this year alone," he says.

"We are providing more flexible packages, too, so people can watch what they want when they want to. We cannot think only about one platform anymore: able, free-to-air, GloboPlay – it is all together."

Grupo Globo CEO Jorge Nóbrega adds that the company "knows 30m" of its viewers but says that it wants to gain insights into each and every one of the roughly 100m Brazilians who consume Globo content each day. "In this world, you know who is logged in, who the subscribers are, what they watched and for how long. And why they did not subscribe."

Scripted product provides one way of delivering those viewers and those insights, perhaps partly explaining why Silvio de Abreu, drama director of Globo, describes the new studio complex as "the most important milestone in the company's history". It represents, he says, "a new era in content production, expanding Globo's capabilities and giving a fresh breath to drama, with a new model of producing telenovelas".

And with streamers looking to make further inroads into Latin American countries, particularly into major markets such as Brazil, Globo has been attempting to adapt to a fast-changing landscape.

"In the last few years, we've wanted to restructure our production processes, content management, talent management, creation and distribution, in order to prepare for the market challenges," continues De Abreu. "And we believe the inauguration of the studios gives us even more possibilities in an area we have already dominated for a while: the creation and production of quality content as our main premise."



Globo's new studio complex totals 4,500 square metres

But the launch of Globo Studios is not simply a domestic play to produce more telenovelas for a country that is rapidly moving into streaming content. Rather, it reflects the company's ambition to stretch its tentacles further around the world and to make the most of surging demand for scripted product.

Nóbrega says he wants to target countries such as China, Turkey and India with his productions, while Raphael Corrêa Netto, executive director of international businesses of Globo, adds that the company is also looking to expand its relationships outside of Brazil.

That means building on long-standing ties with the likes of US Hispanic network Telemundo but also forging new partnerships in English-language scripted series, such as its deal with Sony Pictures Television that is already in the works.

"We are moving forward on our first production of a series in English, the first one from a total of three series," he explains. "This is an important step towards the position we are building, as an international production player of high-end drama and short formats."

The first show, *O Anjo De Hamburgo*, is set in 1940s Germany and explores the story of Aracy de Carvalho, an employee of the Brazilian consulate in Hamburg and her romance with writer João Guimarães Rosa. The story delves into De Carvalho's work helping Jews escape to Brazil, with the series' creator Mario Teixeira writing alongside British scribe Rachel Anthony.

"For the second production with Sony, we are producing *Rio Connection*, which will tell the real story of a group of European mobsters that chose Rio de Janeiro, in Brazil, as the most important and strategic point for heroin trafficking to the United States in the 1970s," he explains.

Corrêa Netto also highlights drama series *Aruanas* as an example of Globo's expanded partnerships. Co-produced with Maria Farinha Filmes, the show was launched in Brazil as an original GloboPlay production and was later distributed via Aruanas.TV to 150 countries, backed by organisations such as Greenpeace and Global Witness.

"That started a brand new distribution model for the company. And now, we are launching the series on the market," adds Corrêa Netto.

International demands are also driving Globo's production away from pure telenovelas and towards the creation of shorter scripted series, something that the expanded studio complex will also help to deliver. Drama chief De Abreu says the company has invested more in the production of shorter format shows "aligned with growth in the consumption of this format worldwide".

Underlining this shift, he adds, is the fact that such series are the only types of programming being taken by Globo's sales staff to MIPCOM this month for global buyers headed to Cannes.

"Aiming at producing and improving drama, we opened the Writer's Room five years ago, where

"We want to understand the difference social tribes we have. It's a huge challenge."

Carlos Schroder
Globo



Aruanas is on Globo's MIPCOM slate

our 250 hired screenwriters can meet, discuss new ideas, elaborate on new projects and develop new and original series," he adds. "This effort represents a wider range of options for the audience, so they can – according to their profiles – assess what we are producing and make their choices considering Globo's greater production capabilities."

Contrasting this drive to engage more viewers domestically and securing more partnerships internationally is Globo's decision to avoid the deep pockets of streamers such as Netflix.

The launch of the new production complex takes Globo Studio – the biggest complex in Latin America – to a total production capacity of 12,500 square meters, with more than 3,000 hours of drama and entertainment shows set to be filmed on the lot over the coming 12 months.

But Nóbrega has no intention of allowing streamers into their ecosystem at present or even selling any of the resulting shows to global streamers. "We won't do what was done in the US, allowing our content to be sold to Netflix and Amazon," he says. "That was how Netflix was born. Our shows will always be on our platform." **TBI**



A man with a beard and a woman with long brown hair are embracing in a city at sunset. The man is in the foreground, looking towards the camera, while the woman is behind him, resting her head on his shoulder. The background shows a city skyline with buildings and a bridge under a warm, orange sky.

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Writer's Room Franck Philippon

Bringing the Alliance to screen

“The presence of four partners – The Alliance’s France TV and ZDF, and Canada’s Bell and Superchannel – with each potentially attracted by one ingredient over another didn’t make the task easy. But it forced us to have a clear vision of the DNA of our show.”

Franck Philippon is the creator and writer of *Mirage* (6 x 60 minutes), one of the first projects to emerge from Europe’s Alliance of public broadcasters. It is being distributed internationally by Cineflix Rights.

M*irage* is the story of the destiny of an ordinary woman, Claire, who is thrust into the dangerous world of espionage and has to take control of her fate. Our first writing challenge was to combine the plot of a spy thriller with the emotional ingredients of a family drama. Finding the balance between these ingredients – an ordinary family, the geo-strategic stakes of espionage and the riveting suspense of a thriller – was crucial to guarantee the series works as a stand-out example of the genre.

At the same time, we needed to ensure audiences everywhere relate to our female lead — so that every viewer is prepared to follow Claire all along her extraordinary adventure in a location that is just as extraordinary: Abu Dhabi.

It’s precisely because of this need that writing for a broad audience watching on multiple networks is such an exciting challenge. Espionage is far from our daily concerns, and rooted in sometimes complex issues such as ideology and geo-political strategy. With *Mirage*, our ambition is to dive into this world through the eyes of an ordinary woman, ready to live a dangerous adventure for emotional reasons that everyone can easily understand, and with whom audiences have a strong and immediate empathy.

Spy series are often carried by characters already involved in the world of espionage. In *Mirage*, on the contrary, Claire doesn’t know anything about this world. For her, diving into this grey world is a leap of faith. And since she’s driven by basic human motivations, any viewer can understand her decisions.

Story-wise, the presence of two networks during the development phase (France TV and ZDF) created a challenge for us to build an immediate connection between Claire and the viewer in order to throw them both into these two mysterious arenas: the world of espionage and Abu Dhabi.

Claire’s character needed to overcome her French

identity. Basically, she could be any Western expat who lands in a modern El Dorado to start over and soon finds herself thrown into a larger-than-life thrilling adventure. As a result, the series speaks to viewers all over the globe, since Claire’s trajectory is that of an ordinary woman determined to go beyond her own past ‘mirages’. And who can claim they have no ghosts in their closet?

We won’t lie: the presence of four partners – France TV and ZDF for the Alliance, and Bell and Superchannel for Canada – with each potentially attracted by one ingredient rather than another, didn’t make the task easy. But it forced us to have a clear vision of the DNA of our show. Having written a pilot before bringing the broadcasters on board was key.

If there were differences of opinion on the mix of ingredients and in the storytelling, it was my role as showrunner to understand the constraints and wishes of each partner in order to address their notes within the natural perimeter of the show — satisfying all partners without betraying its DNA.

It’s a role I would describe as more a respectful stubbornness rather than subservient diplomacy. But this obsessive fidelity to an original point of view requires constantly convincing everyone, draft after draft. And, ultimately having several partners benefitted the show because it forced the creators (Bénédicte Charles, Olivier Pouponneau and myself) to fine-tune our point of view.

Ultimately, throughout this long journey into the heart of the espionage world, our goal is to tell the coming-of-age trajectory of a woman determined to go through her own mirages in order to gain her freedom. A woman not only torn between two men, but also between her self-fulfilment and her family.

And the original part of her destiny is that her path of emancipation starts with her rebirth as a secret agent – a promise of many seasons to come for *Mirage*. **TBI**

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Script to Screen: The Capture

On the set of BBC One's surveillance conspiracy thriller, Kaltrina Bylykbashi gets the lowdown on the series that has UK viewers in suspense this autumn

This spring, TBI found itself at the “mothership” – a bunker with a wall full of cascading CCTV footage taken from across London that looks like the lair of a new top-secret data-collection organisation. Of course, this isn't a real secret location, but a studio in West London, where BBC's surveillance conspiracy thriller *The Capture* from Heyday Television – NBCUniversal International Studios' joint venture with producer David Heyman – is being shot.

Just days away from wrapping, it is clear that this is going to be an ambitious project. Hollywood megastars Ron Perlman (*Hellboy*) and Famke Janssen (*X-Men*) are filming a very serious, very confidential

conversation, while writer-director Ben Chanan watches on. Meanwhile, Heyday executive producer Rosie Alison walks us through how the project came to be, all while trying not to reveal too much about the upcoming plot.

“We had always been interested in those 1970s American conspiracy thrillers – something that's a specific incident, but which can spiral out in a meaningful way,” says Alison.

“So, in came a spec and I couldn't believe that Ben had come up with a really brilliantly worked-out, brilliantly-led conspiracy thriller. I just rang the agent and said, ‘Please, I need to meet Ben at once.’”

The script from Chanan – who makes his debut

The Capture's mothership features 120 screens



as auteur – focuses on British soldier Shaun Emery (Callum Turner) who was formerly convicted of a murder in Afghanistan before having his sentence overturned. After he regains freedom and returns to normal life with his six-year-old daughter, damning CCTV footage from a new incident in London surfaces and Emery is forced to fight for his freedom once more.

It quickly becomes apparent, however, that the truth about Emery is merely a matter of perspective. The show uses the soldier's story to repeatedly test the audience on whether what they see via CCTV footage is real and whether security services around the world – from MI5 to the CIA – are working for us or against us.

The action-packed 6 x 60-minute series has been written and directed in its entirety by Chanan, the director behind shows including *Cyberbully* and the second season of BBC and Starz drama *The Missing*. Heyman, Heyday's Tom Winchester, NBCU's Tom Coan and BBC One's Ben Irving join Alison as executive producers, while Derek Ritchie, who previously produced hit BBC detective show *Luther*, was also drafted in to produce on the show.

Writer-director Ben Chanan's doc experience covering UK surveillance proved useful

Act 1 – A post-truth thriller

Chanan's insight into the security industry began with his work as director on the BAFTA-winning documentary *The Plot To Bring Down Britain's Planes* (2012), which followed a UK surveillance operation that focused on a group of British men from East London who had plans to blow up multiple airlines with explosives masked as soft drinks.

While the plot for *The Capture* is not directly inspired by these events, Chanan's deep-rooted knowledge of surveillance is what drove him to conjure up a conspiracy thriller that would touch on some of what he had learnt from the world of counterterrorism. It turns out he had his finger on the pulse.

"When Rosie and I first started working together, I used to have this office with a giant whiteboard for the core ideas we needed. A surveillance thriller was always one of those titles on the board," says Coan, as he joins TBI's conversation with Alison.

"We explored lots of opportunities and lots of books and none felt quite right for some reason – it had to have the magic of an individual and their specific take



and connection to it. And then *The Capture* came into our lives and I've never seen Rosie work so quickly to get in on a project."

The execs admit that they had to beat some stiff competition to get Chanan on board, but with Heyday's credentials as a film company – the prodco is behind the *Harry Potter* franchise as well as this year's Quentin Tarantino film *Once Upon A Time In Hollywood* – and its propensity to work with writer-directors, they were able to sign him up.

Things moved quickly from there. The team worked with Chanan to develop the script for six months before pitching it to the BBC, which immediately commissioned the show via drama controller Piers Wenger. A short turnaround, according to the execs.

"There's a real appetite and hunger to find something that's contemporary, political – with a small 'p' – and a 'state of the nation' thriller," says Alison. "The BBC were really thrilled to get something like that, because it can be hard to find."

Act 2 – Bringing the abstract to life

Once *The Capture* received the greenlight, the execs had their next challenge: bringing the many moving parts in Chanan's script together on screen.

Presenting an authentic picture of the City of London, CCTV footage and the structure of the surveillance services was key for the team to ensure that it resonated with audiences. As a result, multiple measures were taken to bring all of these elements to life.

One such measure included Turner, along with Holliday Grainger – who plays DI Rachel Carey – receiving professional training in each of their character's professions to get a deeper understanding of their roles. Grainger took on counter-terrorism classes, while Turner trained in the army.

A focus was also placed on the CCTV footage that would be shown in the series. Coan says they wanted

BBC drama controller Piers Wenger immediately commissioned the drama following the pitch



to bring it to life in a way "that didn't look dull" and that would invoke personal paranoia among viewers. To do so, the team brought in *Luther*'s Ritchie and multidisciplinary artist Mark Doman, who had previously worked on BBC One's *Spooks*, to create the footage both for the mothership – which features 120 screens – and key scenes in which we see the lead characters play out on screen.

"We created this world of surveillance to surround the drama," says Doman. "We filmed London day and night for six months. We just built up these stories, these different textures and layers of life that come from being the most surveilled country in the world. We wanted to portray the idea that there's surveillance everywhere."

The team admits, however, that overall they were simply enablers to Chanan's vision.

"Ben has the whole of *The Capture* in his head in a way that none of us could know and he presented it in a script form that got us all interested," says Coan. "The Heyday process is about really considered storytelling. No massive movements from the script, but making sure everything sits well together."

Act 3 – New blood and new views

At its core, Coan says *The Capture* centres on "a detective and soldier who have a cat and mouse game that drives them to a singular truth". High stakes have been placed on the heads of Grainger and Turner, who the execs have positioned at the forefront of the series to draw in the masses.

The duo are no strangers to success: Grainger recently appeared in the film *Animals* and BBC One's *Strike*, while Turner just wrapped up a role in the latest *Fantastic Beasts* film – but Alison insists that their work in *The Capture* will be defining for the both of them.

"I think this is Holliday and Callum's show," says Winchester. "One hopes that they will appeal to a younger audience because I think they have such wide appeal – especially with bringing in the world of *Harry Potter* – and they will bring the highly sought-after young audience the BBC is always after."

Meanwhile, catering to an international audience, Perlman and Janssen have also been flown in as a CIA agent and the head of US intel, thanks to some string-pulling by Coan.

"It's a story about our relationship with the US," says Winchester. "And, luckily, that happens to be at a time when TV itself is incredibly global."

Overall, the team's aspirations for the title are no secret. *Line of Duty* – BBC One's best-watched show of 2019 – is just one of their reference points throughout the conversation, along with Harrison Ford hit *The Fugitive*. **TBI**

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 Top Pick

Scripted Hot Picks

Breakout dramas are headed to Cannes, ranging from contemporary thrillers such as *Devils* and *Black Bitch* to gritty fare turning history on its head, such as *The Trial of Christine Keeler* and *The Terror: Infamy*

The Trial Of Christine Keeler

While most Brits may know the Profumo Affair as the political scandal that rocked Harold Macmillan's government in the early 1960s, few have ever been privy to the perspective of 19-year-old Christine Keeler, whose brief sexual relationship with then Secretary of State John Profumo is credited to have been the epicentre of that government's eventual undoing.

The story, which re-entered headlines in 2017 upon Keeler's death, is ripe for telling in the current climate – one that looks more favourably on her point of view, according to writer Amanda Coe (*Apple Tree Yard*, *Black Narcissus*), who carried out exhaustive research into Keeler's life around the time of the scandal.

"The [material] that is undiscovered has to do with her perspective, which is what would it feel like to be a teenage girl who comes from a very limited and damaged background and is suddenly the most famous woman in the country?" says Coe.

"In a sense, the tabloids created the story and that is something that's in the mix of the drama – how she was encouraged to perform a certain version of events she got trapped in and that other people became collateral damage to."

The Trial Of Christine Keeler is the first project to emerge from Keshet International's \$55m drama fund for English-language drama, launched last year. The drama stars newcomer Sophie Cookson as Keeler, while Ben Miles is Profumo and James Norton plays Stephen Ward, who was in the orbit of the affair as part of the inner circle.

Producer Rebecca Ferguson adds that the team was suggested male directors, but she was determined to secure a female director. "I wanted [Andrea Harkin] from the get-go," she explains.

"It's not that men can't direct women, but there is a definite distinction between the male and female gaze. Andrea has brought an intimacy and poetry to this."

The project is to air on BBC One in the new year. **TBI**

The Trial Of Christine Keeler

Distributors: Keshet International/Endeavor Content

Producers: Ecosse Films, Great Meadow Productions

Broadcaster: BBC One (UK)

Logline: An explosive new perspective into the headline-grabbing Profumo Affair of the 1960s



The Terror: Infamy

T *rue Blood's* Alexander Woo and Max Borenstein, who has been behind *Kong: Skull Island* and *Godzilla*, co-created this “haunting and suspenseful” drama that combines supernatural twists with a story about the internment of Japanese Americans and the aftermath of Hiroshima.

Woo is attached as showrunner and exec producer, alongside Borenstein, on the anthology series, which follows the first instalment of *The Terror*, which provided a fictionalised account of Captain Sir John Franklin's lost expedition to the Arctic in 1845–1848.

The action this time takes place during World War II and centers on a series of bizarre deaths that haunt a Japanese American community. The plot moves on to follow a young man's journey to understand and

combat the malevolent entity responsible, chronicling the life of Chester Nakayama, along with his friends and family, as they face persecution from the American government while they battle the evil spirit that threatens their future.

Like the first season, elements of the show have been inspired by true events, in this case telling the story of Japanese American internment more than 70 years ago. From 1942 to 1945, more than 145,000 Japanese Americans and Japanese Canadians were forced from their homes and into internment camps by their respective governments, because of where they or their ancestors were born.

“Their story is one of perseverance in the face of injustice,” AMC says, adding that the series is “asking what it truly means to be an American”.

Derek Mio takes the lead role of Chester Nakayama, while Kiki Sukezane (*Lost in Space*) Cristina Rodlo (*Miss Bala*) and Shingo Usami (*Unbroken*) also star. Producer, author and activist George Takei (*Star Trek*) also features and serves as a consultant on the series, which has an executive producer roster that includes Ridley Scott, David W. Zucker, Alexandra Milchan, Guymon Casady and Jordan Sheehan. **TBI**

The Terror: Infamy

Distributor: AMC Studios

Producers: Scott Free, Emaj Productions, Entertainment 360

Broadcaster: AMC (US)

Logline: A series of bizarre deaths haunt a Japanese American community, as a young man tries to combat the malevolent entity responsible

22 July

Norwegian public broadcaster NRK's drama *22 July* examines the aftermath of the 2011 tragedies in Oslo that saw far-right terrorist Anders Breivik detonate a van bomb in the Norwegian capital and carry out a shooting rampage at a summer camp on the island of Utøya.

The long-gestating project has spurred “significant interest” because of the nature of the drama and sensitive subject matter, according to Dave Clarke, EVP of content at DRG. However, the tragedy is handled with the greatest care and respect, he assures.

The project follows a couple of films over the last year that have tackled the tragedy, including Paul Greengrass's Netflix film, also titled *22 July*, as well as Norwegian director Eric Poppe's *Utøya: July 22*.

However, while those titles are “more about the actual event and deconstructing the attack,” explains Clarke, “NRK was extremely conscious of not wanting to do that”.

“They wanted to tackle [the attacks'] impact on people, so you see them through the eyes of the journalist, policeman and some other characters who were in and around Oslo at the time but weren't necessarily directly involved,” he says.

“It's about dealing with that impact, the grief, the shock and how they coped. The perpetrator is never seen in the drama. This is not about even acknowledging Breivik in any way or enhancing that reputation.”

Recent programmes such as Sky and HBO's Emmy-winning limited series *Chernobyl* have raised the bar for historical drama, and *22 July* hopes to do the same, says Clarke, who agrees that there has been a ‘*Chernobyl* effect’ of sorts “in terms of people's openness to engaging with a subject matter that is extremely challenging” but made with high production values.

Clarke says the business is talking to a range of buyers, but “the emotional and creative place” the drama is coming from suggests a better fit for public service broadcasters. **TBI**

22 July

Distributor: DRG

Directors: Sara Johnsen, Pål Sletaune

Broadcaster: NRK (Norway)

Logline: A tense contemporary historical piece exploring the impact of the 2011 Norway attacks



Black Bitch

Rachel Griffiths is perhaps best known internationally for starring in the likes of ABC's *Brothers & Sisters*, HBO's *Six Feet Under* and even the film *Muriel's Wedding*, but in *Black Bitch*, the actor takes on a creative role, realising a story that has sat with her since the 1990s.

Fresh from its debut at the Toronto International Film Festival last month, *Black Bitch* tells the story of a local Indigenous politician (Deborah Mailman) who is convinced to join the senate by the Australian Prime Minister (Griffiths), who has ulterior motives of her own.

Griffiths, who is Australian, tells TBI that the story was inspired by local politics from the period that resonated with her. She knew a potential show would tackle “sexism and racism inherent within a parliamentary system, the barriers to women representing their constituents, the cost of service and the boys club in most operating democracies”.

But presenting the project, initially as a film, was tough. “I used to pitch it and people would just go blank, look at me and say, ‘Well that’s not going to happen,’” she says.

Years later, Griffiths realised she couldn't make the show on her own “because it was ultimately walking in an Indigenous Australian's shoes”. She pitched the 6 x 60-minute project to Blackfella Films founder Darren Dale who was looking to do a political show.

“He got it up incredibly quickly and drove it forward,” she explains, adding that Keshet had really significant skin in the game early on”, which ultimately allowed ABC to take a risk as well.

In regards to the title, Griffiths recognises it can be divisive and says ABC has changed it to *Total Control* for the local market. An alternative title is also available globally.

But, she adds, a punchy title can be a useful benchmark. “It keeps you reaching for something. You need to live up to the name.” **TBI**

Black Bitch

Distributors: Keshet International/Endeavor Content

Producer: Blackfella Films

Broadcaster: ABC (Australia)

Logline: An indigenous politician is pulled into the Prime Minister's web of lies



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Devils

Based on the novel *I diavoli* by Guido Maria Brera, 10-part thriller *Devils* is set largely in London and follows the high-stakes world of global finance during the 2011 debt crisis in Europe.

The drama centres on a hot-shot trader (Alessandro Borghi) whose meteoric rise at a global investment bank, aided by his mentor (*Grey's Anatomy's* Patrick Dempsey), is derailed by a personal crisis that plays out against a more nefarious, international backdrop. Think *Billions* meets *Wall Street*.

Nils Hartmann, director of original production for Sky Italia, says that while the drama was shot in English, it is “truly a European show” and remains true to its Italian roots with a mixed cast and crew.

Devils

Distributor: NBCUniversal Global Distribution

Producers: Sky Italia, Lux Vide

Broadcaster: Sky Italia

Logline: A thriller set in the world of high finance follows the European debt crisis through the prism of two traders in London

“The main director [Nick Hurran] is English but the second director is Italian,” says Hartmann. “I love the idea of *Devils* crossing bridges at a moment when politics are trying to create boundaries.”

The project will also be dubbed in Italian for the broadcaster, as per other global-facing drama offerings, such as *The Young Pope*.

The series was shepherded by Sky Studios' Jane Millichip and her team at Sky Vision – what Hartmann calls a “proper co-production” – before it was handed over to NBCUniversal Global Distribution, following Comcast's takeover of Sky earlier this year.

In addition to showcasing the drama at May's LA Screenings, the distribution powerhouse has made *Devils* a key priority for MIPCOM.

The shuttering of Sky Vision has not had any impact on the trajectory of the show's sales, says Hartmann, who adds that the drama will likely get picked up by Sky UK and is currently courting US buyers as well.

“We're going to see how far this can travel,” he says enthusiastically. Discussions are also currently underway around a second season of the drama. **TBI**

Masantonio

This one looks like a must for fans of contemporary Italian crime dramas, coming as it does from the same production company that has been behind series including *Gomorra* and *Suburra* over recent years.

Produced for Mediaset in Italy by Cattleya, *Masantonio* delves into the world of missing person's investigations. The 10 x 50-minute series is described as an "intriguing procedural crime drama that digs deep into the heart of missing persons investigations – uncovering the human story within".

Written by Gianluca Leoncini and Valerio Cilio, the show is based in Genoa and revolves around the statistic that around 25,000 people in Italy go missing each year without trace. The response in Genoa is to establish an office, hidden in an old museum, with a roster of staff who are tasked with finding these people.

Alessandro Preziosi stars in the title role as Elio Masantonio, a "lone wolf" with a complex personality who, on the surface, appears to be the worst possible candidate to lead the newly established office. However, the producers add, "Masantonio has an extraordinary ability to get inside the lives – and heads – of the disappeared."

Masantonio

Distributor: ITV Studios Global Entertainment

Producer: Cattleya

Broadcaster: Mediaset (Italy)

Logline: Procedural crime drama with a new take on missing persons investigations

The procedural, which is directed by Fabio Mollo and Enrico Rosati, follows both the stories of the disappeared and the show's title lead as he finds his feet in the new organisation. Despite appearing to be ill-suited to the task, his superiors quickly see his potential, which comes to the fore when he is partnered with Sandro Riva, played by Davide Iacopini.

Described as "a profoundly honest, open and patient cop," he is Masantonio's opposite and ensures the show incorporates both procedural arcs referencing the "intricate, puzzling cases" of the missing people as well as a wider study into the two detectives' lives and their complex relationship.

Bebo Storti, Claudia Pandolfi, Daniela Camera and Virginia Campolucci also star in the Italian-language show from Cattleya, whose slate also includes *ZeroZeroZero* and the forthcoming Latin-language series *Romulus*. **TBI**



Deadwater Fell

Good Omens star David Tennant and *The Good Fight*'s Cush Jumbo lead the cast for Channel 4's *Deadwater Fell* (working title), a moody Scotland-shot drama about a murder that shakes a small town to its core.

The Kudos-produced psychological thriller (4 x 60 minutes) centres on an entire family that is murdered by someone they know, ultimately leading to a veil of suspicion descending on their closest friends and family.

While she describes the show as “gripping” and “quite dark”, Endemol Shine International boss Cathy Payne says that, ultimately, *Deadwater Fell* is “really a thinking piece” that explores the cause and aftermath of a tragedy.

In addition to a compelling conceit, what is attracting buyers is the cast, explains Payne.

“They’re really strong cast in what some people might think is a domestic UK show. Being able to attract a cast at that level really brings in that interest,” she says.

The project has not been dependent on pre-sales and has thus had “the luxury of waiting” and taking

it out to buyers a little later, says Payne. So far, there has been interest from traditional broadcasters as well as regional SVODs such as C More out of Sweden.

The project will deliver just ahead of Christmas, and is set to TX early next year on Channel 4. *Deadwater Fell* is written by *Humans* and *Grantchester* scribe Daisy Coulam.

Coulam said when the project was first unveiled that she “wanted to look at the notion of evil”.

“We’re very quick to call something evil – to dismiss it out of hand as something inhuman or monstrous, but it is humans who commit these acts,” she said. “*Deadwater Fell* is an unflinching look at a community we might live in, families we might know and what happens when tragedy befalls them.” **TBI**

Deadwater Fell

Distributor: Endemol Shine International

Producer: Kudos

Broadcaster: Channel 4 (UK)

Logline: A psychological thriller about a small town rocked by the murder of a family



The Kollektive

This political thriller is from Amsterdam-based producer Submarine and has been inspired by the company's feature documentary *Bellingcat – Truth In A Post-Truth World*, which explores citizen-driven investigative journalism.

The eight-part drama is being written by *Gomorrah* alumni Leonardo Fasoli and Maddalena Ravagli, with the story focusing on a citizen journalism group known as The Kollektive that is committed to uncovering the truth at all costs and investigating the misdeeds of governments and multinational corporations.

The show picks up the story of the group as they seek answers after one of their members dies in mysterious circumstances in Cairo. His young friends and colleagues look into the death but then find themselves trapped in a plot that threatens to destroy global democracy. The series takes viewers around the world, revealing “disturbing connections” between politics, fake news factories and crime from Malta to Saint Petersburg.

“We are constantly inspired by contemporary stories that have relevance for our world today,” says Femke Wolting, co-founder and MD of Submarine. “That is why we were drawn to this project as it enables us to create an entertaining contemporary spy thriller based on the amazing work of groups like Bellingcat.

“And it is fantastic to be joined by storytellers of Leonardo and Maddalena’s calibre to take the fascinating work of modern-day citizen investigative journalism into a fictional realm.”

The show joins an expanding slate for Submarine, which has offices in Los Angeles and is also behind projects including original scripted animation series *Undone* for Amazon Prime Video, true crime series *The Singh Case*, and animated feature *Coppelia*.

For Fasoli and Ravagli, the opportunity to explore issues such as ‘fake news’ was a key reason why they signed on.

“We love investigating what is happening in the world around us and tackling difficult questions through our work,” the duo explain. “We feel that the battle for truth against fake news exploited in order to direct the public opinion is the battle for freedom in our time. It is a fight for the millennial generation.”

TBI

The Kollektive

Distributor: TBC

Producer: Submarine

Broadcaster: TBC

Logline: Takes viewers inside the world of 21st-century citizen investigative journalism

The Hunt: Monteperdido



Spanish scripted series have gained traction around the world over recent years and this drama looks likely to continue that trend. Directed by Salvador García Ruiz and Álvaro Ron, it tells the story of two families who struggle to get their lives back on track after the disappearance of two girls. Five years later, one of the 11-year-olds re-emerges, reopening old wounds and suspicions as to who was involved.

The show is set in the Pyrenees and has Agustín

Martínez and Antonio Mercero attached among writers, with Megan Montaner, Francis Lorenzo and Alain Hernández starring.

RTVE tells TBI the show will attract an international audience because of its “universal story”, which “reflects ordinary life, family relations and how an unexpected drama affects all of them”.

The series has become a primetime ratings hit for the Spanish broadcaster and secured an award at the Vitoria FestVal, as well as being nominated in the best fiction category for Prix Europe.

The show, which also makes the most of the stunning scenery of the Pyrenees, is set to be extended, with RTVE confirming that a second season is in the works. It will be known as *The Hunt: Tramuntana* and will be set on the Spanish island of Mallorca. **TBI**

The Hunt: Monteperdido

Distributor: RTVE Commercial

Producers: DLO Producciones, RTVE

Broadcaster: RTVE (Spain)

Logline: A disturbing psychological thriller revolving around two families

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Charting a path to the Maze

US kids network Nickelodeon turned to a decades-old UK format originally aimed at adults to bolster its unscripted offering and attract a co-viewing audience. Richard Middleton finds out why



Demand for family shows that drive co-viewing has been surging over the past year, prompting both new format ideas coming to market but also a flicking through of the back catalogue for unexploited gems.

And few shows were as unexploited as *The Crystal Maze*. The format has been around in the UK for more than three decades since making its debut on Channel 4 in the 1990s, creating a legion of loyal fans. But it had never travelled abroad and was little known beyond UK shores.

That was until a Brit working for US kids channel

The Crystal Maze has always skewed towards a younger audience

Nickelodeon, who happened to recall watching the show in his younger years, was faced with the task of finding an unscripted show that could offer something different to both his younger viewers and their parents.

“Nick has a history of unscripted but over the past few years there hadn’t been a lot of such shows on the network,” explains Rob Bagshaw, who was named head of unscripted at Nickelodeon in January.

“Our president Brian Robbins picked up on this and realised that our young audience was watching a lot of unscripted hits on other networks, as well as on the streamers and other platforms – YouTube and the

like. He said we should be giving them those sorts of shows on Nick.”

Bagshaw, a veteran of reality TV, started exploring his options, looking at both fresh IP and older formats. “A lot of new ideas are adult versus child, or family versus family, but the great thing about *The Crystal Maze* is that it is family versus the house,” he explains from the show’s set at the Bottle Yard Studios in Bristol, UK.

“The family plays together and so they succeed or fail against the house. And it is not a show that puts contestants in conflict with other human beings – that is a good message.”

With *The Crystal Maze* in mind, Bagshaw turned to the UK to explore the viability of taking this veteran format – originally aimed at adults – and remaking it for kids in the US.

In the classic format, teams of five or six contestants – adults, in the original UK series – attempt to win crystals by completing physical and mental games within themed zones that include Aztec, Future, Industrial and a fourth area that has previously reflected a Medieval and Eastern look. Each crystal allows the team to spend five seconds inside a huge dome, within which they must catch gold tokens that are being blown around by fans. These can then be exchanged for prizes.

“When you present this format, and with the zones you go through, the conversation we had was more about the escape room phenomenon and how that is something that kids and families in the US love to do,” he says. “There hadn’t been a version of that on TV – we could’ve created an original idea about escape rooms but there was already this existing idea in the UK.”

In fact, there had been an existing set – of sorts – in the UK, too, for a few years, and without the rat-infested river that snaked through the original location. It had been created by a group of superfans, who funded a project to recreate the show in all its glory and then allowed others to experience the series for themselves, paying for the privilege.

It was aimed at long-term fans of the show, such as Neale Simpson, creative director at Fizz, the entertainment label for Banijay Group-backed RDF Television. As a long-term devotee of the series, Simpson had not just watched the programme in its Channel 4 days but he had brought it back to life.

He had initially been trying to come up with a “big gameshow idea” and thought he’d landed on a winner when, mid-pitch, he “realised it was just a crap knock-off of *The Crystal Maze*”.

So he delved into the records to find just who owned the format and realised that through some “legal

“We could have created an original idea about escape rooms but there was already this existing show in the UK.”

Rob Bagshaw
Nickelodeon



technicality” related to fellow adventure format *Fort Boyard* it was Adventure Line Productions, a sister company of Banijay. That was in 2011.

“I spent the next six years trying to bring it back, but the big thing was that I’d have to say to broadcasters that if you want to try this show and see if it works again, you’ve got to build a 32,000-square foot set. That is expensive and a big risk.”

With the superfan-created *Crystal Maze Live Experience* set already in place in London, however, Simpson saw an opportunity. As part of a Channel 4 fundraising night of programming, the broadcaster was rebooting a series of classic series and *The Crystal Maze*, set within the experience centre, got the greenlight.

Not that it was straightforward. Simpson says it was “hell” as the crew turned the centre into a functioning TV set in barely 12 hours, but the effort was worth it.

“We delivered the show 12 hours before it went on air. When I woke up to the overnights, 4.5m people had watched it. I sat in a café crying and Tom Beck, Channel 4’s commissioner, phoned up and said, ‘We’re doing more.’”

They did just that and when Bagshaw came calling, an entire set – rather than an experience centre – had been already created. “The set is so immersive, it’s beautiful, and it is up and running and that is an expensive thing to do,” the Nick exec says. “To bring a family to do it here with people who know exactly how these games work in a pre-existing set made much more sense than trying to recreate that in the US and start from scratch.”

Nick named Adam Conover as host, taking a key role as the quirky and eccentric leader who takes the teams through the maze, while RDF, which is producing with Bunim/Murray Productions (BMP), tweaked the games to ensure younger players and their families could play.

Bagshaw, who says he is looking at cookery and pet series to add to Nick’s unscripted slate, has also been keen to ensure a diverse range of families are cast. He adds that while the target demo is kids, the show has also been embraced by older children and adults watching alongside.

“*Crystal Maze* is such a clean and strong format that it was not difficult at all to adapt for the kids and family audience,” adds Gil Goldschein, chairman and CEO at BMP.

“Obviously, we had to ensure that the physical challenges contained within the various zones were age-appropriate, but other than that, the game play is similar to the UK version,” he continues. The hope now, of course, will be that the format delivers a similar legion of fans in the US, too. **TBI**

Mind the gap

Delivering a splashy format hit is getting more expensive at the same time as demand for unscripted content is rising. Richard Middleton explores the options for producers



Drive Master sees Keshet International teaming up with Russian commercial broadcaster NTV



It has been a year since Netflix revealed it had picked up global remake rights to Studio Lambert's hit *The Circle* and was planning to remake the show internationally, prompting a flurry of excitement for third-party format owners around the world.

It underlined the burgeoning interest in unscripted product from streamers but for the format business in particular, it highlighted the fact that streamers – or at least Netflix – were looking at local adaptations in multiple territories.

It also came at an opportune moment for the format business, whose travails in the financing side of things have perhaps been overshadowed over recent years by the explosive surge in the cost of drama. As in scripted, the costs of creating and producing splashy, high-impact shows have been rising and broadcasters rarely have the budgets to keep pace. That has left a gap to fill.

“The point about deficit funding is that it is particularly relevant to public service broadcasters,” says Tim Hincks, a veteran of the format business who was president of Endemol Shine Group before setting up UK-based prodco Expectation with former ITV chief Peter Fincham in 2016.

“It is about how much money they are willing to put aside for unscripted. We all know about the scripted side of things, that it is taken as read, but in non-scripted it has undoubtedly become a challenge.”

“Principally, you don't get enough money from, say, a UK buyer to make your show,” adds Stephen Lambert, CEO at Studio Lambert, which is behind formats such as *Gogglebox*, *Race Across The World* and *Undercover Boss*.

“They expect your distributor to put in increasing amounts of advance but then you have to clear that advance before you see any back end – and it is difficult to resist that pressure.”

This situation is not necessarily new but the extent of deficits in the format business is certainly growing, which is providing opportunities for third parties to get involved. Exactly that happened with Lambert's show *The Circle*: it originally aired on Channel 4 in the UK but was co-produced by his All3Media-owned prodco and Motion Content Group, the IP and rights firm backed by advertising giant GroupM.

“Motion are co-producers for us with *The Circle*,” Lambert explains, “because Channel 4 had a deal with them at that point and that was their only way of being able to pay for the show in the first instance.”

The investment outfit has sunk itself deep into both the scripted and unscripted market over recent years,

funding over 500 series for nearly 200 broadcasters/platforms in partnership with over 100 producers. Aside from *The Circle*, it also counts mega hits such as ITV Studios' *Love Island* on its slate.

The group's involvement inevitably means having another stake holder profiting from projects but they are also a facilitator in a market that now regularly requires third-party investment to get shows up and running.

“Would I have preferred to have been able to do a conventional deal without Motion?” asks Lambert. “Yes, but if they tell me that there is money that wouldn't exist otherwise – and I believe them – then I'd rather take the money than not.”

Several senior execs in the format business have told TBI that some advertising-backed agencies have tended to suck cash out of the business, but Lambert and Hincks agree that that has not been their recent experience.

“Some of those companies used to want to get in at the ground level,” continues the Expectation co-founder. “A few years back they wanted to be involved in the creation of the format but the truth is that it is happening less and less – it is never very helpful for anyone to say that, unless they are the format creator.”

“What they have worked out instead is that they don't need to do that. They can come in and make up the deficit – if you don't [do a deal] then you probably won't get the show off the ground,” he says, adding that it isn't so much a fundamental shift as a “nibbling away” of the traditional model.

Over in Israel, a slightly different landscape is emerging. Deficit funding exists and deals are in the works with ad agencies but there are also new models emerging that perhaps represent an alternative way to market. One of these is the “sharing is caring” model employed by Keshet International, says the company's MD of networks Revital Basel.

“Sometimes a broadcaster's need is very specific and finding an international format for a slot is [challenging], so we offer a different solution.” The model, essentially a co-development deal, has been used to create *Drive Master*, which has seen KI working with Russian commercial broadcaster NTV on an idea created specifically for the network.

KI has borne the cost of development while NTV produces the show locally and both companies then partner on rights. “So we keep rights in Israel forever, and we're developing the format now for Keshet in Israel, and they keep Russian rights forever. Then we share rest of world.”

Basel says the model means for the “cost of an option they get a full team with international

experience” while KI gets rights to a format that has been produced and is on air. “We create formats that we think have the potential to sell internationally, so we’re bringing together both local and global.”

Deals involving local and global partners are also emerging as a tonic to deal with static broadcaster budgets. Hincks points out that when a broadcaster’s funding is insufficient to get a show away in their home territory, their suggestion is to explore adding a potential deal with an SVOD to get the deal over the line.

“But then you are selling your global rights to that SVOD,” adds Lambert. “At least if you are relying on a distribution advance, if it is a good format and if the tape is attractive, then there is a realistic chance of clearing that advance out. But if you are selling it to an SVOD, that is it really.”

Yet the PSBs remain a key buyer of content, even if risk-taking is increasingly tough. Last month, ITV’s director of television Kevin Lygo admitted that the industry has become more “brutal than ever” on shows that do not immediately perform, with a resulting impact on commissioning new ideas.

But for producers such as Fincham and Lambert, broadcasters still commission off paper and on some shows they still pay the full cost of production. But the conundrum is that broadcasters tend to need more ambitious format ideas in order to cut through, which are by their nature often more costly to produce.

“That is why it is a nibbling away rather than a fundamental shift,” says Hincks. “It is pragmatic in a way, if you are going for the bigger slots and bigger budgets you will almost without doubt have a conversation about who can come in.”

And that is why Netflix but also Amazon are enticing partners to a degree for producers. “The exciting thing about an SVOD at the scale of Netflix is its decision to make a lot of original content for lots of different parts of the world,” he reflects.

“We tended originally to think of an SVOD as a global player and that the content it was interested in was only going to be the stuff that would play around the world. But they know they have to create a collection of programming that is attractive to different markets.

“That decision is having a big effect on everybody but particularly on unscripted because there is the ability to make different versions of a format in the conventional way. And that is not something we knew was going to happen - and it isn’t really something that anybody aside from Netflix is doing.”

Lambert adds that Amazon is experimenting

“a little bit” but he adds that the next wave of streamers could offer yet more options.

Short-form streamer Quibi, for example, has started to look at formats, with both Lambert and Hincks talking to the Jeffrey Katzenberg-fronted streamer about potential deals. Elsewhere, *Hollywood Game Night* producer Mission Control Media is developing a US adaptation of Israeli format *Come To Bed* for the service, as reported by TBI earlier this year.

The format is largely fixed-rig and follows the bedtime habits and conversations of five couples from different backgrounds and in diverse partnerships. It is distributed by Small World IFT, with Mission Control swooping to option US rights.

Facebook Watch could also be dipping its toe into the format market in a way, with *Red Table Talk* set to be reversioned outside of the US according to creator Jada Pinkett Smith (the social media giant is yet to confirm the roll-out), while in other markets the addition of brands is helping formats travel.

Endemol Shine Group’s *Best.Cover.Ever* received its first international adaptation in Brazil after the company’s local division partnered with music festival VillaMix and global brewer AB for a local, brand-funded version of the show, known as *O Próximo Número 1 VillaMix*. Like the US format, which was from Ryan Seacrest Productions, Endemol Shine North America and Columbia Records, it is available via YouTube.

That might be some way from the traditional broadcaster-led financing model of old but it underlines the ongoing shift of the format market and the myriad ways shows can now be greenlit. SVOD interest in unscripted and formats is increasing, costs for big ideas are rising and broadcasters’ budgets show no sign of surging: the result is that the equation to get format ideas up and running is about to get more complicated. **TBI**

“Would I have preferred to have been able to do a conventional deal without Motion?”

Yes.”

Stephen Lambert
Studio Lambert



Channel 4’s *The Circle* is heavily backed by Group M’s Motion Content Group





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Crazy cash and snackable shorts: The future of entertainment on SVODs

As the likes of Netflix, Amazon and Quibi begin to get their unscripted affairs in order with heavy-hitting greenlights for global-facing shows such as *The Circle*, *Back Of The Net* and *Elba vs Block*, their strategy remains frustratingly opaque. TBI gathered some of the best creative minds in entertainment and formats to shed light on their experiences with the SVODs. Are the days of “crazy cash” over for Netflix? What is Jeffrey Katzenberg looking for in an entertainment offering on Quibi? Does Amazon stand a chance of catching up in the unscripted arena? By Manori Ravindran



Michelle Chappell
Creative director, Workerbee



Tim Crescenti
President, Small World IFT



David Flynn
Co-founder, Youngest Media



Lisa Perrin
CEO, Creative Networks,
Endemol Shine Group



Sohail Shah
Non-executive director,
Elstree Studios

What does the future of unscripted on streamers look like?

LP (ESG): What Netflix is doing with *The Circle* is interesting. They are doing a hub in Manchester and flying in the Brazilians, French and Americans – and doing it in real time, with one episode a day, rather like *Big Brother*. But 18 months ago, I wouldn't have thought that's something they would have gone for. It's going to be interesting to see how that works. They've yet to crack their big shiny floor show, but they will. People will binge-watch a quiz show now – they will binge-watch something they like no matter what the genre is

DF (Youngest): The interesting thing we're finding is that, as well as those binge-watch shows, now streamers also need shows for people who have 30 minutes and don't want to get into something they can't stop watching, but rather something that will really entertain them for that 13 minutes they have spare. The tradition of snackable shows is coming through. But the competition in OTT is only heating up, and they all need their tentpole pieces to sell in a competitive market. And some of those pieces are drama, but entertainment can be that tentpole as well

LP (ESG): When we've spoken to Netflix commissioners, [they have said] *Nailed It!* is their biggest

show. And that's why the budgets are coming down on Netflix, because that was done for an awful lot less than *The Crown*. It will be interesting to see how it works when they roll it out in local language, but as a format for them, it's done incredibly well. It's not really cooking – it's a comedy entertainment show, and it's a hit with their young audience

SS (Elstree): I also love *Sugar Rush*, and what's clever is that at the end of each episode, they say, 'If you enjoyed that, there's another one coming up', and it just starts. So you watch another one

LP (ESG): I love that niche thing they've done. The glassblowers show on Netflix, *Blown Away*, is fantastic. You just think, 'Why am I watching this thing about bloody glass-blowing? But I am'. It's so clever

MC (Workerbee): It's great because no terrestrial would have put that on

How is Netflix beginning to localise in regards to entertainment?

DF (Youngest): When you start looking at how Netflix is thinking of local content, for a company like ours that is expanding into the international marketplace, that sort of injection of energy, cash and enthusiasm in those local markets has a brilliant effect in that everyone feels like

they want to up their game. Everyone starts to look at original content as a way to differentiate themselves

LP (ESG): But they realise it needs to be tonally different in different markets. You can't just lift an American format and make it in German and assume it will work, because it won't cut it. You do have to localise it. They're one of the first streamers to recognise that. Amazon will also do so as well – they have a strong local team starting

Endemol Shine recently sold Family Food Fight into Brazil, for broadcaster SBT and Amazon Prime Video. What else are you working on with them?

LP (ESG): We also did a deal with Amazon for comedy-variety series *Last One Laughing*. We are doing that in Mexico, Australia and a couple of other markets

We are totally work for hire. They own the format. But we've taken a view that we want to be their work for hire in those markets and that's something we've decided to go for. We also have some other original development in both through the US and through Georgia Brown in London. That seems to work OK

SS (Elstree): I was asked by a company to help them with a children's idea they wanted to flesh out for Amazon, and they have gone for it. It goes into

"I was short-form commissioner at the BBC in entertainment, and Quibi have got right straight away what we wanted to do at the BBC but were restricted by the cash."

Sohail Shah



production in November. I found it very easy to flesh out their idea but in terms of what Amazon required to do so, I didn't think it was anything I wouldn't have expected them to ask for. But I got the impression that they were learning what they should be asking for based on what we were pitching. Because it's so new to all of us. Now that their team is in place, they will be more forthcoming and clearer in what they are looking for

Workerbee had the first UK commission from Quibi and was the first company to start delivering cuts to them. Tell us about that experience

LP (ESG): We were there at the pitch with Jeffrey Katzenberg in February in London. They all waltzed in and it was quite a big deal. Everyone traipsed in and did pitches with them.

MC (Workerbee): It's quite amusing. [Workerbee MD Rick Murray] was away and I was on jury service and we sent our poor head of development up to pitch to Katzenberg, but he had a great idea so we thought, 'Well this is going to be fine'. And it was, because when you have a great idea, it sells. He pitched *Elba vs Block* and he had a great bit of tape and [the Quibi team] just thought 'Idris Elba, brilliant' and they backed it. It was very quick.

Within six weeks, it got over the line, and then we





were in production six weeks later. Because we were the first to start delivering cuts, that was interesting because we were figuring it out – should there be closed episodes, cliff-hangers, series arcs? All those bits you’re trying to wrestle with. Initially we started to deliver 10 minutes, and in the end the cuts were five minutes long. We were told that the average 16 to 24-year-old watches content for six minutes and 50 seconds. Katzenberg then watched some cuts and, to summarise it crudely, he just said, ‘I want it louder and I want it quicker’

At what point did he get involved?

MC (Workerbee): At the fine-cut stage, he just watched over them, which is great. They give quite light-touch notes but they’re really constructive. They’re just fun to work with

DF (Youngest): The interesting thing with Quibi is that it’s the most amazing creative challenge and liberation to say, ‘We need to think differently about duration’. But it’s not just US streamers; we’ve just delivered *HouseShare* for BBC Three and that is 23-27 minutes, depending on what the episode needs. And across the board, the OTT delivery allows us to be free in terms of how we create

MC (Workerbee): Suddenly making it vertical as well is quite interesting, because it’s both vertical and horizontal. You find that enhances the storytelling because you’re looking for other ways to show [the action], so you might have lots of split-screens and lots of different angles on one vertical page. It actually makes

“Netflix knows they have to pay a premium because they’re paying for producers for hire and taking rights off the table, so they’re prepared to pay a bit more, but those days of crazy cash are definitely gone”

Lisa Perrin



you think more creatively about a product, which is quite good

How did you manage technically? Was that all in the edit stage?

MC (Workerbee): Yes, in the edit. We delivered two versions. But we’ve had to play along as we go. It’s the vertical challenge

DF (Youngest): We’ve been talking with Quibi and we found that they’re quick and up for good ideas. We came idea-first to them and they will engage at that kind of level because much like all SVODs, no one knows yet what will work in the entertainment space for streamers, and the only way we can work it out is by trying things out

The rights situation is interesting, because the rights are returned to you after a period of time. What will you do then with that content?

MC (Workerbee): You can repackage them. It’s perfect. For something like *Elba vs Block*, obviously we have shot a lot more than what’s going to go out, so when we do repackage, it’s almost like a whole different programme with much more narrative. They’ve really thought about what makes them different

TC (Small World): So, when you’re producing the show, you’re thinking, ‘Okay, these are 10-minute segments,’ but you’re also thinking how will it work when you repackage this

MC (Workerbee): On the next one, we’ll be more forward-thinking on that, but for this one, things happened on set that we captured but which were too nuanced to put in the 10 minutes, but brilliant in the long form. Next time, we might plan slightly differently to account for the long form as well.

They said to us, too, to view cuts on our phones. Though we did look in the edit as well (laughs)

DF (Youngest): Good point. You can think something is incredibly clear, sitting in an edit with a big screen...

MC (Workerbee): ...But then the kids are watching it on their phones

DF (Youngest): You’ve got to have that viewing stage and look at whether things like subtitles are coming across properly

MC (Workerbee): Colours are also very important

and can really punch through on the phone. And Quibi involved us in all the marketing as well. It was brilliant to be involved in that, when you wouldn't so much in the terrestrial digital space

SS (Elstree): I was short-form commissioner at the BBC in entertainment, and Quibi have got right straight away what we wanted to do at the BBC but were restricted by the cash. Now there has been a cash injection so things have changed, but I had people pitching nice ideas to me, but short-form had a challenging budget. However, the idea and lengths would have been the same, in theory – between 5 and 10 minutes. The difference is Quibi is giving you the cash to be able to realise what you want us to see in a really, really good way. They're brilliant, and I look forward to seeing what we can do with it; it just guts me that we couldn't do it on BBC Three, because it's what we wanted to do

DF (Youngest): I think, though, as producers we now need to be flexible to be able to work with, in a perfect world, both Quibi and US networks, but also BBC Three and the online distribution platforms whose budgets are even smaller than those short-form ones. You have to think about how to ready your team for that, and whether the tech is there in terms of the way you can turn things around, how you can shoot things, and have edits in the office. You have to be careful you're not putting everything towards these new providers

How do you go about pitching to these platforms when they're commissioning extremely niche programmes but also more wide-appeal offerings?

LP (ESG): We've started doing some multi-territory pitching. We're doing non-English language pitches all together, so it feels very joined up for them right from the very beginning, which seems to have worked for some

“At MIPCOM, we're going to bring back *I Survived A Japanese Gameshow* and present that to the streaming platforms. But it's the risk of, 'OK are we going to make more money by doing that in 13 territories or 25 territories?' That's the risk ”

Tim Crescenti



streamers, knowing that local language is something that they want

How does that work?

LP (ESG): If we come up with a great format idea, we go in with our German, French, Spanish and Italian partners. So, you go in as a multi-language, non-English language pitch, which for Netflix and Amazon is important because they've hit a limit in the US and UK and the Nordics are completely saturated – all these countries watch the English versions. So, the big subscription uplift is non-English language, that's why there's a massive opportunity. So for us, going in on multi-territory with a format everyone wants to make seems to be working

MC (Workerbee): It is different developing for the SVODs, because you only get that one shot. Everything has to be locked down with the talent. The idea of going in with a few top lines – you might as well just get out of the room now. It has to be fully formed. They don't really develop in the room first straight away – they'll develop with you later – but it's really that one shot

LP (ESG): The tape has to be excellent. You have to spend a lot of money, and once you've shown it once, it's done. As traditional developers, you make a tape and you think you can show it to BBC One, Channel 4, Channel 5. Now you have to specifically make it for a Disney+ or Netflix, because tonally it's very different. Especially a Disney+ is very different. You're burning through a lot of ideas and a lot of tape time. It costs a lot of money.

But, to be fair we're doing something with Netflix, where they looked at it and they went, 'We love that picture' and it sold

DF (Youngest): That's the other part of it. That front image has become more and more important. Popping on a screen amidst major choice is a real challenge. You should be thinking about that visual at the pitch stage, and what the visual can add

SS (Elstree): Netflix changes their thumbnail constantly for shows – it's all dependent on the algorithm

What's new with YouTube?

LP (ESG): We are getting some traction. Remarkable Factual has done a big virtual reality history series, which is amazing. They've come up with this innovative way of using VR. YouTube has dropped the paywall and they're leaning into premium education. Locally, there are a



couple of markets they're really looking into as well

What markets are they targeting?

LP (ESG): YouTube is looking into Germany for German local language, as well as Spanish local language. That's the main push. Germany is getting a lot of interest because it's a wealthy country with a big middle-class and big population. Tonally, it's very different in how people watch TV, so all the streamers feel like Germany is an opportunity. Amazon, Netflix and others all want to commission German local language

As a distributor, how do you navigate – and negotiate – sales into streamers?

TC (Small World): At MIPCOM, we're going to bring back *I Survived A Japanese Gameshow* with a turnkey production hub and present that to the streaming platforms. But it's the risk of, 'OK are we going to make more money by doing that in 13 territories or 25 territories?' That's the risk. Another thing is, if you get a deal with these streamers, they will give you China which is nice, but we can't sell into China, so thank you for that (laughs)

LP (ESG): For us, as a group, we always look at the formats we're pitching and think, are they the right formats for the streamers, or are they formats that could potentially be rolled out in a more traditional way? But ultimately, the creatives just want the ideas made. Netflix, Amazon and Quibi are all very sexy places to play – why wouldn't you want your content up there? So you're hardly going to say to people, 'You can't pitch that'. You have to think 'horses for courses'

DF (Youngest): It's a big choice, but for *The Circle*, it feels like Studio Lambert made a very good choice to drive it through Netflix. They have been very supportive

How have budgets fared in recent years? Amazon reportedly paid up to \$250m for *The Grand Tour*. Are we still looking at these types of deals in unscripted?

MC (Workerbee): They've got a pyramid of different tariffs, and the top is really expensive. The budgets are very good

TC (Small World): Whatever Amazon paid for *The Grand Tour*, you're never going to get that deal anywhere

“Katzenberg then watched some cuts and, to summarise it crudely, he just said, ‘I want it louder and I want it quicker’ ”

Michelle Chappell



LP (ESG): I think the days of crazy cash are gone. Netflix understood that there was a *Crown* Effect, where they overpaid for that massive bankable thing that I'm sure they'll make their money back on, but it slightly skewed the drama market and they're very aware – particularly as they go into other markets – that they have to keep the market rate, and to benchmark what the French market rate is, and what the German rate is

They know they have to pay a premium because they're paying for producers for hire and taking rights off the table, so they're prepared to pay a bit more, but those days of crazy cash are definitely gone. But it makes sense: they only have a finite amount of money which has to go to more countries with more content. People burn through because audiences binge-watch. So, they're constantly running, which is great because they want content, but they're going to spread that a little bit thinner. What's interesting is that this is happening right when we begin to see a drop-off in US subs for Netflix, as per the most recent results

LP (ESG): Yeah, and unless you've got a Disney+ deep-pocketed budget, it's going to be quite interesting. It's inevitable the budgets will be slightly more sensible and the margins will be smaller and they'll have to look at perhaps doing Quibi-style deals. Certainly, budgets are lower than what they were two years ago

TC (Small World): Streamers initially want to make a splash so they do A-list celeb deals, but where's all your money going if you've got someone like Justin Bieber? And also, when you attach someone like that, is there really a role for this person? Are we going to get Bieber's 34m followers?

DF (Youngest): He's very good in the edit, to be fair. **TBI**



LODGERS

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Breaking down the next wave of streamers on the block



Release date: 12 November, 2019

Launch markets: US, Canada, Netherlands (12 November); Australia, New Zealand (19 November)

Pricing: \$6.99/month

Originals content spend: \$1bn

Third-party content: Selectively licensed

Originals greenlit to date: 48

Key execs: Ricky Strauss (president, content and marketing); Agnes Chu (SVP content); Jan Koeppen (president, EMEA); Luke Bradley-Jones (SVP direct-to-consumer and GM, Europe and Africa)



Unscripted highlights: *The World According to Jeff Goldblum*; Kirsten Bell's *Encore!*; Nat Geo's *Magic Of The Animal Kingdom*; *Earthkeepers*

Scripted highlights: *The Mandalorian*; *She-Hulk*; *Monsters At Work*; *Short Circuit*; *Lady & The Tramp*; *Love, Simon*; *Togo*; *Lizzie McGuire*



Release date: 1 November, 2019

Launch markets: 100 countries, including UK, Australia, Canada, France, Germany

Pricing: \$4.99/month

Originals content spend: \$6bn

Third-party content: None (only available via third-party apps)

Originals greenlit to date: ~40

Key execs: Jamie Erlicht and Zack Van Amburg (co-heads of worldwide video programming); Morgan Wandell (head of international content development); Jay Hunt (creative director, Europe); Molly Thompson (head of documentaries)

Unscripted highlights: *Oprah's Book Club*; Oprah Winfrey's *Toxic Labour*; *Home*; *Dads*

Scripted highlights: Steven Spielberg's *Amazing Stories*; Reese Witherspoon's *The Morning Show*; Steven Knight's *See*; *Ghostwriter*; *Truth Be Told*; *Dickinson*



Release date: 2020

Launch markets: US-only to date

Pricing: Estimated \$17-20/month (confirmed to be more than \$14.99 HBO Go offering)

Originals content spend: ~\$2bn (AT&T's HBO Originals spend only)

Third-party content: Yes (ie. BBC Studios' *Doctor Who* and *Top Gear*)

Total shows greenlit to date: 16 (+9 new HBO shows)

Key execs: Kevin Reilly (chief content officer); Sarah Aubrey (head of original content); Joey Chavez (EVP original drama); Jennifer O'Connell (EVP original non-fiction, kids); Jennifer Kim (SVP international originals); Suzanna Makkos (EVP original comedy, animation)

Unscripted highlights: *Extreme Camp*; *Ellen's Home Design Challenge*; *Legendary*; *The Greatest Space*; *First Dates Hotel*

Scripted highlights: Lupita Nyong'o-starrer *Americanah*; *Gossip Girl* reboot; *Dune*; *The Sisterhood*; Anna Kendrick's *Love Life*; Ansel Elgort-starring *Tokyo Vice*



peacock

Release date: April 2020

Launch markets: US-only

Pricing: Unknown (Two tiers: paid tier estimated \$5, plus free ad-supported tier)

Originals content spend: Unknown

Third-party content: Selectively licensed

Total shows greenlit to date: 15

Key execs: Bonnie Hammer (chairman of direct-to-consumer, digital enterprises); Bill McGoldrick (president, original content); Betsy Slenzak (VP unscripted development)



Unscripted highlights: *Saturday Night Live* docuseries *Who Wrote That*; Jimmy Fallon talk show series; Seth Meyers exec-produced weekly late-night show with Amber Ruffin; *The Real Housewives* spin-off

Scripted highlights: True crime podcast-based *Dr. Death*; *Brave New World* adaptation; Emmy Rossum's *Angelyne*; *One Of Us Is Lying*; Rashida Jones's *Straight Talk*; reboots of *Mr. Robot*, *Saved By The Bell*, *Punky Brewster*

Quibi



Release date: 6 April, 2020

Launch markets: North America

Pricing: \$4.99/month with ads; \$7.99/month ad-free

Originals content spend: \$1bn

Third-party content: No

Total shows greenlit to date: 38

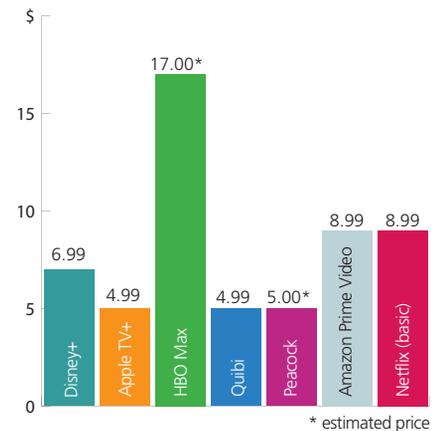
Key execs: Jeffrey Katzenberg (co-founder); Meg Whitman (co-founder); Jim Toth (head of content acquisition and talent); Doug Herzog (content exec); Kate Presutti (content exec)

Unscripted highlights: *Elba vs. Block*; *Punk'd*; *Singled Out*; Jennifer Lopez's *Thanks A Million*; *Daily Essentials*; *Fight Like A Girl*; Lena Waithe's *You Ain't Got These*

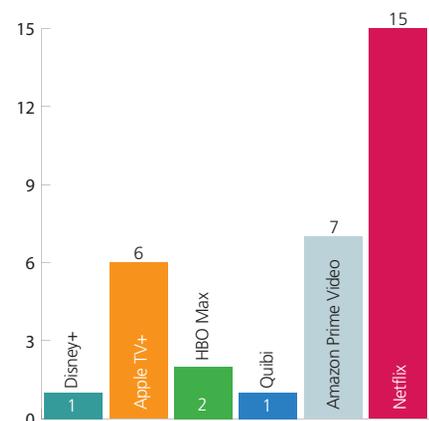
Scripted highlights: Steven Spielberg's *After Dark*; sci-fi *Don't Look Deeper*; Anna Kendrick's *Dummy*; *How To Lose A Guy In 10 Days* reboot; Darren Criss co-created *Royalties*

By the numbers

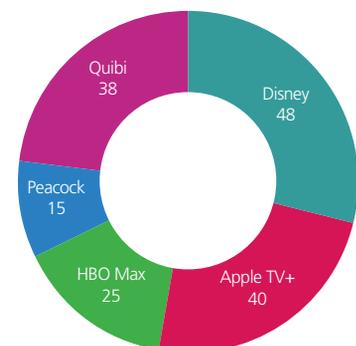
Price point per month (\$):



Content spend 2019/2020 (\$bn)



Total originals greenlit

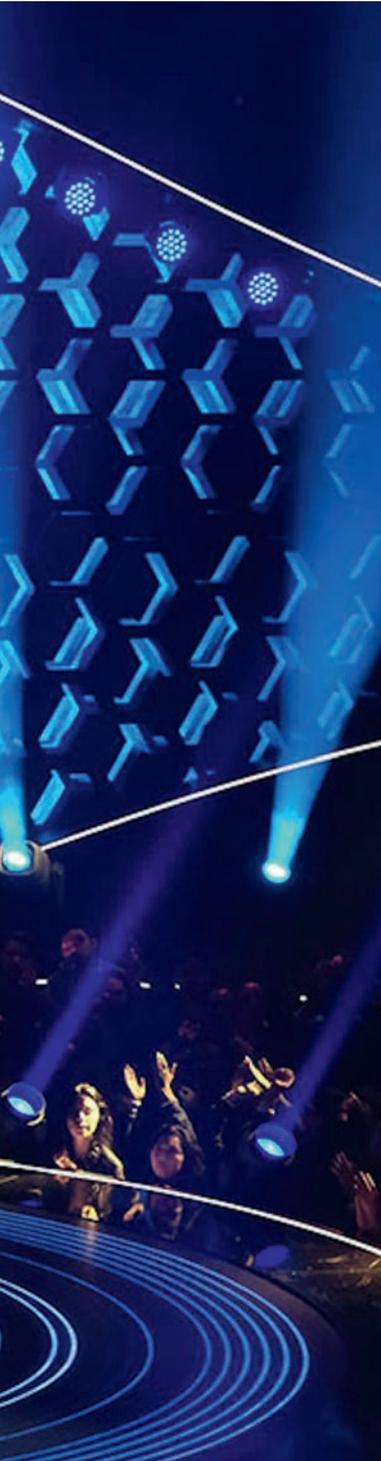


Forward thinking

ITV Studios' deal for Israel's Armoza Formats over the summer marked a watershed moment for the unscripted business. Richard Middleton talks to founder Avi Armoza



The Four was renewed for a second season by Fox in 2018



ITV Studios has been involved in its fair share of M&A activity over the past five years, but few deals have underlined the changing nature of the unscripted business as its acquisition of Armoza Formats earlier this summer.

The Israeli format creator and distributor has been a constant at TV markets around the world over the past decade, with its stock soaring following Fox's acquisition of *The Four*, the entertainment show created by Armoza's in-house team.

But while such deals flung founder Avi Armoza and his company to new heights on the global stage, it became clear that in the TV world where scale matters, no matter how good the underlying IP might be, selling format rights would only take his firm so far.

"We realised that we needed to get into production, we knew that that would be the next level of income for us," Armoza tells TBI. And as the veteran format exec explains, his growth philosophy – that "to stand still is to go backwards" – meant shifting away from a pure IP creation and sales operation.

For companies such as ITVS and Endemol Shine Group, the strategy of selling a broadcaster format rights, then charging a production fee on top to create a local version – using their own, local production firm – has become a key revenue generator.

But for smaller companies such as Armoza, despite being heavily laden with IP, taking that next step into production can fast become a leap.

The company, which is behind a raft of formats including social experiment *Sex Tape* and entertainment series *I Can Do That!*, had made some production moves prior to the ITVS acquisition, most notably striking a deal with ex-Shine France founder and CEO Thierry Lachkar that would see his firm, Deeply Superficial, producing the Israeli outfit's formats in the country.

But Armoza admits that by going down the M&A route, scale can now be achieved far more quickly – and that has become increasingly important as streamers become more active across the unscripted landscape. "And they are not buying formats," he says, "they are buying productions and finished tape."

"Through M&A, we can very quickly go to the top floor of production and all of a sudden team up with ITVS, which has so many production companies. At the push of a button, we are really advancing."

The deal highlights not only the increasing

importance of being able to produce for new unscripted players, but also the allure of IP-holding firms such as Armoza to muscular, global players such as ITVS.

"Our company was growing and developing, and we became increasingly attractive, with approaches from different directions," he explains. UK-based investment bank Stella Capital Partners oversaw the process for Armoza, with multiple outfits looking to take a stake in the Israeli company.

"If you have one, two or three companies looking at you, it's better to go through a structured process, in which you explore all markets and find the right partners," he says of appointing Stella.

While Armoza won't divulge the firm's other suitors, he does shed light on why ITVS fit the bill. Financials were, of course, important, but the culture of the acquiring company was vital. "If you look at M&A, there are often more failures than successes. We were looking for a company that had a shared vision, and we found that in terms of culture and values at ITVS," he says.

"It was about understanding the role of creativity within the organisation, too, and understanding that there is not only one way to achieve that creativity. Armoza was operating in a very unique way: we were not a production company in our country but we were able to develop and create IP on global scale."

Armoza will continue to operate largely independently, he says, despite ITVS' 100% acquisition of the company.

It will also, however, become part of ITVS' Global Creative Network, headed up by Mike Beale, extending its reach around the world. But Armoza adds that retaining the company's DNA and spirit will be key to delivering future format hits. Its slate of new formats heading to MIPCOM also shows little sign of waning ideas, with the likes of *Queens of Love* becoming available to buyers for the first time.

The show has been created in-house and features three drag queens who use their outspoken personalities to audition potential suitors, analysing the date and the potential partner. It is joined by third party shows such as fellow dating-reality show *Single Parents Cruising*, from Zone 3, and studio entertainment format *Song Of My Life*, from Yellow Film & TV, on the first ITVS-backed Armoza slate.

"The aim is to create more, but another aim is to understand the platforms that we have and the reach we have now, in terms of where ITVS operates," Armoza says. "We're better placed to get

“Our company was growing and developing, and we became increasingly attractive, with approaches from different directions.”

Avi Armoza
Armoza Formats



Queens Of Love and Sex Tape are among Armoza's formats heading to MIPCOM

the knowledge and needs of each market, and we can tailor and focus our development operation, that will be our main challenge.”

The deal has injected “new spirit and energy” into the company, Armoza continues, but he admits the unscripted market is becoming increasingly tough for mid-range players. Either you are small and nimble enough to survive, or you become part of a global player that enjoys scales of efficiency and clout.

“The toughest place to be is in between. If you want to expand, then you need a wider footprint on the international market.”

With the ITVS deal now in the bag, Armoza is focused on expanding the operations of the

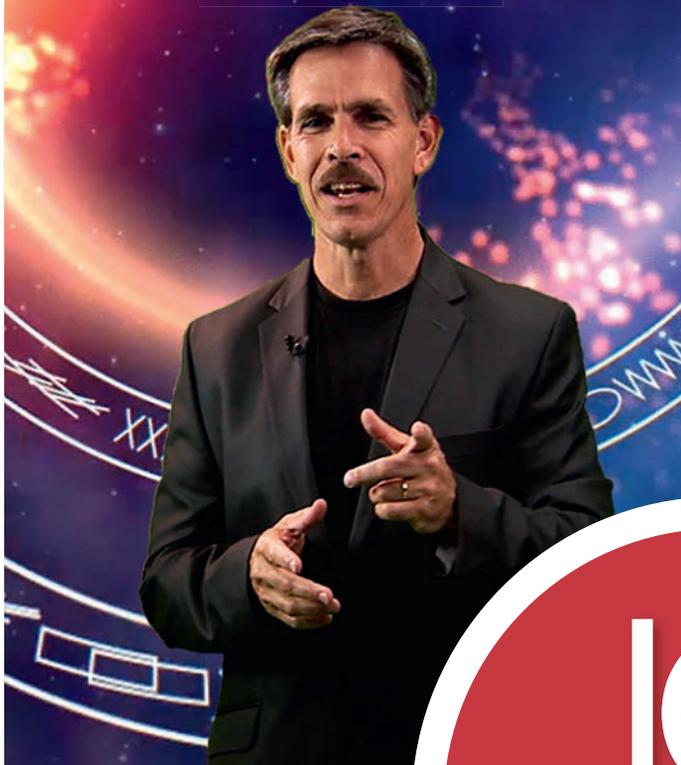
company that bears his name but now belongs to someone else.

“It’s a stage of experimentation for the streamers: they are changing models and trying different things,” he says. “In terms of regulation and commercial necessity, they will need to do local productions in certain territories and also in local languages. And this is one of the benefits of being part of a group with a large production capability – you have more efficiencies and models that you can utilise.”

And those opportunities look likely to spark further M&A, as the creative companies behind formats and rights holders look to gain from the lucrative world of production on a global scale. **TBI**

COSMIC FUTURIST

Science // 6 x 60' // 4K



EYE IN THE SKY

Natural History // 3 x 60' // 4K



LG
MEDIA

VISIT US AT
P-1.C86

INSIDE SAUDI ARABIA RACE TO CHANGE

People & Places // 1 x 60' // 4K



SPIKY GOLD HUNTERS

Travel & Adventure // 6 x 60' // 4K





Viewpoint Lisa Perrin

Brotherly love

“Big Brother is one of the very few shows that can claim it created a brand new genre that remains popular to this day.”

Big Brother, the big daddy of reality formats, the one that genuinely changed television forever, is celebrating a landmark birthday. Twenty years ago, nine pioneering housemates entered a house in the outskirts of Amsterdam with no contact with the outside world, to be filmed around the clock by 24 cameras. *Big Brother* is one of the very few television shows that can claim it created a brand new genre that remains popular to this day.

Fast forward two decades on and reality television continues to leave audiences gripped. These formats are still amongst the most travelled internationally. Just what is it about reality series that makes viewers obsess over them? Is it because it's like looking in a mirror, imagining how you would react in the situations we see on our screens?

Reality forms an important part of any broadcaster's schedule. It's tried and tested to deliver audiences, especially in the all-important 16-34 demo. *Big Brother* fills a large part of a schedule, bringing with it a lot of noise. Whether celebrity or civilian, there are always great characters in *Big Brother* and in the territories that have rested the show, viewers have definitely missed it. The format is relishing a renaissance, with the latest comebacks in Poland and Finland this year – and Germany and Sweden confirmed for 2020.

We are now busy planning the next 20 years and have come up with innovative new ways to produce the show with new tech. Two years ago, we drastically changed the workflow, gallery and approach to filming. This has opened up lots more creative opportunities – new cameras and AI have enabled us to take the show out of the traditional set and into new locations, like a beautiful house in Warsaw or a shopping mall in the heart of Helsinki. These versions feel modern and contemporary and

move the format on with an authentic environment for the housemates to interact.

Big Brother has always been brave with its casting. It reflects society, giving a voice to people from different backgrounds – be it BAME, LGBTQ or the older generation. This diversity is unique and appeals to viewers and broadcasters, giving people license to talk about important topics. I'm proud to say there have been three transgender women appearing in our many Indian versions, the most recent of which is currently on air, and Canada welcomed the first non-binary housemate in 2019.

The flexibility of the format means we can also put other issues front and centre, with sustainability and environmental issues being highlighted in *Big Brother* around the world. We're looking at all our productions and what we can do to improve practices, especially considering *Big Brother's* huge global audience. It's forming a big part of the show with an eco-house in Finland, and in India real water restrictions have been implemented for housemates to mirror what is happening in drought struck parts of the country. Behind the scenes in Germany, they saved an estimated 12,000 coffee cups by using reusable bamboo mugs. Younger viewers have a lot at stake when it comes to the environment and if we want *Big Brother* to last another 20 years we need to engage with their passion.

As we celebrate *Big Brother's* epic success, we are putting building blocks in place to keep people engaging and interacting with the format, adding twists and turns, keeping it entertaining and immersive. With 18 markets on board this year, we have ambitions for even more comebacks and successes. Who knows what's in store for any of us in the next 20 years, but one thing is for sure: the world will be watching. **TBI**

Lisa Perrin is CEO of Endemol Shine Group's Creative Networks

NEW CONTENT FOR MIPCOM



**BRADLEY WALSH & SON:
BREAKING DAD**

10 x 30
Hungry Bear Media
for ITV 1



**TOM KERRIDGE'S
AMERICAN FEAST**

10 x 30
Blink Films
for Food Network



**CRISTIANO RONALDO
MEETS PIERS MORGAN**

1 x 60
Plum Pictures
for ITV 1



**EASY WAYS
TO LIVE WELL**

3 x 60
Keo Films
for BBC One



**TALKING ANIMALS
TALES FROM THE ZOO**

6 x 60
Emporium Productions
for Channel 5



**WAR ON PLASTIC
WITH HUGH & ANITA**

4 x 60
Keo Films
for BBC One

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Formats Hot Picks

The formats we're betting on at MIPCOM



Top
Pick

Five Guys A Week

Distributor: Fremantle

Producer: Label1

Broadcaster: Channel 4 (UK)

Logline: A single woman invites five suitors to live with her for a week, eliminating them one by one in an attempt to find her perfect match

With its arresting title, dating show *Five Guys A Week* sets out to transform the first-date experience by providing one single woman with the chance to compare and contrast five suitors in real time.

Fast-tracking the “getting to know you period”, the woman must live with five boyfriends for a week – all at the same time, eliminating one each day, until the last man standing.

The ‘locally sourced’ men go everywhere with their host en-masse: to work, on a night out with mates, or for dinner with the parents, with a combination of fixed-rig and roaming

cameras following the action. As such, it's billed as a test of romance, compatibility and stamina – a dating show that explores what people actually want from their partners as well as offering a sometimes surprising insight into the male psyche.

Five Guys A Week is produced by Label1, best known for factual hit *The Hospital* and format *The Job Interview*. Channel 4 ordered a pilot of the show in 2018, and earlier this year announced it was taking it to series with another 9 x 60-minute episodes to accompany the pilot, creating

a 10-part commission.

It is being executive produced by Label1's new head of factual entertainment Barnaby Coughlin, who has form in the dating genre, having previously executive produced C4 shows *First Dates* and *First Dates Hotel* at Twenty Twenty.

“We wanted to create a show that compared and contrasted men's very different wooing techniques, all the while putting the woman at the centre of the experience and leaving the decisions to her,” explains Simon Dickson, co-founder and creative director of Label1.

He says the first scene that Label1 dreamed up was five guys ringing a woman's doorbell, one after another in quick succession. Next, they thought it would be revealing and funny to see what happens when the girl takes her five

“boyfriends” to meet her parents. “Pretty soon, we realised we had the beginnings of a powerful format,” says Dickson.

Throughout, the woman is in total control and watching the competition between the men drives the format. Dickson says the show also delivers regular “hits” of excitement and intrigue throughout – taking dating shows to the next level by upping the formatting while keeping the “rules” simple.

“Take, for example, the way in which the format allows for the eliminations, when the woman kicks out each unsuccessful guy, to happen in the real world. This hasn't been seen before outside of big entertainment shows or competitive set-ups such as *Bake Off*. We wanted to bring this excitement into the unscripted space.”

Don't

Distributor: Banijay Rights

Producer: Banijay Studios North America

Broadcaster: ABC (US)

Logline: A gameshow where a family can win money by following one simple rule – Don't

Picked up by ABC in the US, new game show *Don't* is currently in the edit. Billed as a comedic physical format, it follows a family of four who must work together throughout five mental and physical challenges with just one rule: Don't. For example, "Don't Slip," "Don't Forget," "Don't Laugh," "Don't Say It," "Don't Scream".

"Accomplish this simple rule and chances are you will win money," explains executive producer David Goldberg, "What makes it tricky is that your brain is telling you to do."

If the family fails a challenge,

they don't earn money and one of them is eliminated from the game, until only one remains. The last remaining relative must then complete the rest of the challenges on their own for a prize of up to \$100,000 for the family.

Don't was developed by Banijay North America and has Ryan Reynolds as an executive producer. *Big Little Lies* actor Adam Scott is to set to host.

Goldberg says *Don't* focuses primarily on physical competitions, often with a question and answer component.

"We have created a unique environment and visual vernacular for the show. You could almost call it 'The Don't World,'" he says.

Creating this world has been the biggest challenge about bringing *Don't* to screen. The Banijay team have shot 8 x



60-minute episodes for this launch season, which required 25 or more unique challenges.

"Any time you create a show from scratch, there are challenges. But in those that involve physical games, some of which are large scale, the challenge is amplified," points out Goldberg.

The format, yet to be formally pitched, is being

introduced to buyers at MIPCOM. "It's been pretty much under wraps," says Goldberg.

He says that while the US show is ambitious, the format can be scaled down to work for smaller markets. It is also suitable for a production hub model, allowing a number of territories to use the same set to offset costs.

Parents' Evening

Distributor: Lineup Industries

Producer: Stellify Media

Broadcaster: BBC Northern Ireland (UK)

Logline: Taking viewers inside the most important night of the high school calendar – the parent-teacher meeting

A parents' evening is often one of the most stressful events of an academic year – for the kids, parents and school. Now it's been made into a doc format by Stellify Media, the Belfast-based indie run as a joint venture with Sony Pictures Television. Filmed with a fixed rig across an academic year, it features a different high school in each episode. Audiences learn what the child thinks of their school, what their parents think of the academics, and get a hint about what the teacher thinks, too.

Stellify co-founder Kieran

Doherty bills *Parents' Evening* as a family sitcom, citing the warmth and humour of *Modern Family* as an inspiration. "It's not just about kids in school – their home life is as important to us as their actual consultations."

Viewers also get to see how parents interact with their kids, while the teachers are also filmed in their staffroom 'precinct', away from the kids.

Casting engaging children, parents and teachers was a key production challenge, adds Stellify co-founder Matthew Worthy. So, too, was the need

to let the parents' evening run naturally. "We couldn't ask for any re-takes if we missed anything. It really focuses the mind," says Worthy.

Perhaps unusually, the format is being represented by Lineup Industries rather than Sony. Lineup co-founder Ed Louwse explains: "As ex-Sony execs we knew the guys at Stellify and

Sony International very well and came across this title. Without any disrespect, this was one of the smaller commissions in the Sony catalogue and not likely to be a focus. Yet it suits our catalogue which includes titles like *Radio Gaga*, *Taboo* and of course *Long Lost Family*, and we felt we could add some value to the process."





Comedians Giving Lectures

Distributor: ITV Studios Global Entertainment

Producer: 12 Yard Productions, part of ITV Studios

Broadcaster: UKTV's Dave (UK)

Logline: Top comedians give their own unique take on an academic lecture

It's like a TED Talk – but with jokes. *Comedians Giving Lectures* launched on UKTV channel Dave in September, and the new format sees top comedians deliver their own take on an academic lecture.

Each talk has the title of a genuine lecture – from “10 Ways the World Could End” to “How to Spot a Liar” – but none of the content. The comedians are then marked on their comedy skills by the audience, as well as an expert in the field of their lecture topic.

Mike Beale, MD of global creative network at ITV Studios, positions the show as part of an overall trend recently for “authentic but simple comedy formats that move away from a classic panel show and take funny people a little outside of their comfort zone”.

Beale says that in a world where politicians and experts are arguing over life-changing issues, *Comedians Giving Lectures* provides a perfect antidote by “taking the big issues and allowing the country's best comedy brains to find the funny

in them”.

Produced by ITV Studios-owned 12 Yard Productions (*Eggheads*, *Who Dares Wins*), the eight-part series was filmed in a real lecture hall to make it feel like an authentic lecture was taking place.

Beale notes that the format gives broadcasters the opportunity to showcase a broader variety of comedy talent and is thus open to not only stand-up comedians but comedy actors and other celebrities as well.

It also means that stand-up comedians can't rehash old material, guaranteeing new content every episode on a wide range of topics – most of which are rarely used as the basis for a comedy routine.

ITV Studios is looking to sell the format into territories with a good precedent of non-scripted comedy, such as the US, Australia, Canada, Benelux and Scandinavia – where Dave hit *Taskmaster* has been picked up.

Beale adds that the format can work across the board globally.

Meat The Family

Distributor: Red Arrow Studios International

Producers: Spun Gold, Rise Films

Broadcaster: Channel 4 (UK)

Logline: Topical social experiment that explores what happens when a family's dinner comes to stay

Tapping into concerns about the natural world, food production, animal welfare and what we eat, this social experiment sees four meat-eating families welcome the animal they most frequently serve for dinner into their home.

Whether a chicken, sheep, pig or even a cow, they treat the new arrival like a pet – taking it for walks and playing with it in a bid to understand its intellectual and emotional capacity. At the end of three weeks, they are forced to make a choice: go vegetarian and send the animal to a sanctuary, or remain meat eaters and kill their friend.

Juliet Rice, head of prodco Spun Gold (*Garden Rescue*, *Secrets Of The National Trust*), says they wanted to make a series about what we eat that didn't feel dry, worthy and preachy but fun and entertaining.

“The minute we asked ourselves why is it that we would eat a little lamb or pig but not our pet dog, it begged a lot of questions. Do we love our dogs more because we think they are smarter than farm animals? Have personalities? [Because they're] cuter?”

It was a short step from there to finding out by getting farm animals to move in with families, Rice explains.

The format, she adds, allows the families to investigate a big issue while on an intensely personal journey of their own. “We decided to shoot the series with observational filmmaking at the heart of it ensuring that it never felt like a features show or indeed a journalist-led specialist factual programme.”

The show also allows broadcasters to tackle a topic that usually sits within factual.



In A Man's World

Distributor: NBCUniversal International Formats

Producers: Lucky 8, JuVee Productions

Broadcaster: Bravo (US)

Logline: Four women undergo astounding transformations to discover what life is truly like in a man's world

In this #MeToo era, new format *In A Man's World* feels timely and likely to stir debate. Billed as a social experiment, it follows four women as they are temporarily transformed into men with help of an Oscar-winning makeup team, plus a voice coach and movement experts.

The idea is that they can then discover how the other gender lives, exploring the differences for men and women in society, their careers and their cultures.

Each of the 4 x 60-minute episodes follows one woman, from pro-pool player to a pastor,



going about their daily lives at work and at home, even fooling their loved ones with their new male alter egos. The series, which launched on Bravo on 1 October, comes from executive producer and Oscar-winning actress Viola Davis' JuVee Productions and Lucky 8.

NBCUniversal International Formats is handling sales. Its SVP of format sales and production Ana Langenberg

argues that the format taps into the cultural zeitgeist, shining a light on the social and gender issues of the modern world.

The women taking part, she adds, discover a lot about themselves and the gender bias that exists today. "The fascinating experiences the women endure will resonate with people all over the world and each episode offers a very different perspective,

highlighting a broad range of issues across the series."

MIPCOM will be the first time that NBCUniversal, which encompasses Bravo, has introduced the series to international buyers. "We will be offering it to all clients in our key markets, particularly the ones where factual entertainment is strong," says Langenberg, who says the format could be a good offering for digital platforms.

Marrying Millions

Distributor: A+E Networks International

Producer: Sharp Entertainment

Broadcaster: Lifetime (US)

Logline: A focus on new couples, where one half of each couple is wealthy and the other is not

Launched in July, Lifetime's new reality show *Marrying Millions* is either about true love or the love of money.

A relationship format, it focuses on newly in love couples that come from completely different worlds, where one half of each couple is extremely wealthy and the other definitively is not.

Take, as an example, one of the couples in the Lifetime series: Bill, 60, is the founder of a commercial real estate company with investments worth billions.

He met Brianna, 21, at a Dallas restaurant where she worked.

Or Gentile, a real estate investor in Las Vegas, who met Brian when he went to work on one of her construction projects. He lives paycheck-to-paycheck, while Gentile has a net worth of around \$15m.

The format follows the couples as they immerse themselves in each other's opposite worlds, meeting the parents, siblings and friends who are suspicious of the relationship and convinced it's just about money.



Gena McCarthy, EVP and head of unscripted at Lifetime and FYI, recalls being pitched a sizzle for the format by Sharp Entertainment.

"It was very much an unscripted iteration of *Pretty Woman*, where the woman with the heart of gold despite a lower economic situation overcomes the odds to achieve romantic

success."

She says it took a lot of patience from the producers to be able to cast six real couples who were prepared to take part.

However, the result, according to McCarthy, is a franchise that "satisfies a vicarious itch to peer into how 'the other half lives' that will please audiences everywhere.

Queens Of Love

Distributor: Armoza Formats

Producer: Armoza Formats

Broadcaster: n/a

Logline: Three drag queens help a singleton audition four potential suitors

There's plenty of twists on the relationship show at this year's MIPCOM (see TBI's Hot Picks for *Five Guys A Week* and *Marrying Millions* in this issue).

Queens Of Love is another, very different spin on dating. Developed in-house by formats specialist Armoza Formats, it's billed as a new take on the genre: three fabulous and outrageous drag queens are charged with rescuing the love life of a singleton every episode by auditioning four potential suitors together.

The drag queens coach the singleton and then sit with them to help cut through the small talk of a first date, using their first-hand experience of both genders to bring out the truth from each suitor and find out the information that really matters.

According to Moshiko Cohen, senior creative director in Armoza's development department, the questions they ask can be extreme and very

funny – how much they earn, whether they have cheated, or to explain their social media activity.

But the idea is to discover “the true essence” of the suitors, and work out if there is “a fit and a chemistry” with their singleton.

Shows such as *RuPaul's Drag Race* have proved that drag queens are a draw on television. “There's something about the fact that they are in costume,” says Cohen. “People open up to them.” He describes the three drag queens in the pilot that Armoza has produced as being like “human lie detectors”.

The result, he says, is a fun watch and relatable hour-long format that should appeal to younger viewers. As is customary for Armoza, the pilot for *Queens Of Love* has been produced without a broadcaster attached. Armoza, now backed by ITV Studios, is launching the format in Cannes, where it will be introduced to buyers for the first time.



HouseShare

Distributor: Youngest Media

Producer: Youngest Media

Broadcaster: BBC Three (UK)

Logline: A group of young people move into the ultimate house share together, sharing a home and all their money



The cost of living in a global city like London makes it an almost impossible dream for many young people to consider moving to.

HouseShare acknowledges this reality and spins it into a format that is squarely aimed at a young audience. It takes six people from all over the country, getting them to share a house in London – and all their money as well.

Over the course of the series, the house sharers do what all new arrivals in a big city do: look for work, friends and love. In this case they also pool their earnings into a joint bank account – causing inevitable tensions if some work harder than others, or if one of the participants spends too much.

HouseShare is created by Youngest Media (*Small Fortune*, *Game Of Clones*). Most of the Youngest team are from outside London themselves, says executive producer Shaun Parry, and moved to the big city to chase their dreams. They had been

struck by reports that few younger people were able to do this now because of the financial climate.

“We started talking about an idea that might help young people achieve this by coming together, sharing everything and supporting each other.”

Parry says the idea of sharing money felt like a good way to bring out people's different values and drive emotional narratives. Money, he points out, doesn't exist in most reality shows. “In this one, it's front and centre. And there's real jeopardy, because each housemate's future is on the line. They've left home and jobs behind to come here.”

HouseShare launches as a 6 x 20-minute series – the equivalent of a commercial half hour – on BBC Three later this year. Parry argues that it has social purpose, but is still funny and entertaining. “It's a reality show that's more real than most, full of relatable contestants and without a bikini in sight.”

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Factual Hot Picks

The best factual one-offs and series hitting Cannes



Top
Pick

War On Plastic

Distributor: Hat Trick International

Producer: Keo Films

Broadcaster: BBC One (UK)

Logline: A call to arms to fight plastic pollution, investigating what we can all do to reduce our use of plastic

Back in 2017, BBC One's *Blue Planet 2* sparked a public outcry about the impact of plastic on the world's oceans, triggering a global debate and focusing the attention of policy makers on the issue.

Two years on, the calls for something to be done have only become louder as concern about plastic use become intertwined with growing fears about climate change.

Instead of revealing the harmful effects of plastics on our seas and marine animals, this campaigning BBC One

series focuses on where the problem is coming from and what can be done about it. Along the way, it accuses big businesses, corrupt systems and poor governance for the plastics crisis, and reveals some appalling stats – such as the fact that the equivalent of a garbage truck full of plastic is emptied into the oceans every minute of every day.

The four-parter is fronted by chef and campaigner Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall and former *Watchdog* presenter Anita Rani.

The producer, Keo Films, has a long track record of creating campaigning films, like *Hugh's Fat Fight* and *Hugh's War On Waste* – and the result can be seen in this series.

On one level, this is a journalistic series that seeks to get to the heart of the plastic crisis. For example, Fearnley-Whittingstall travels to Malaysia to find mountainous piles of supposedly recyclable British plastics rotting on illegal dumpsites, and local families suffering from its toxic effects.

Rani, meanwhile, confronts organisations contributing to the crisis and visits wet wipe companies to ask why they aren't telling consumers about the plastic they contain. She also joins young activists who are campaigning for

McDonalds to stop giving away plastic children's toys.

But *War On Plastic* is more than a series of investigative reports. "The challenge with any environmental film is to find ways to make it accessible to a broad BBC One audience as well as revelatory and hard-hitting, which is why so much time and effort is spent dreaming up big, eye-catching stunts like the opening of episode one, when a garbage truck load of plastics is apparently tipped into the sea," says Sarah Tong, director of sales at Hat Trick International, which has a long-running output deal with Keo and is handling distribution for this series.

To reach a wide audience, environmental films also need to be entertaining and funny too, which is why Fearnley-Whittingstall in one episode puts on a dodgy moustache and markets tap water to plastic bottle-drinking tourists in Covent Garden. Tong says the series also "has an emotional heart" provided by the documentary elements on a plastic-free street in Bristol.

Tong says there's also a very clear format for *War On Plastic*, giving it remake potential. However, because Fearnley-Whittingstall is a well-known personality internationally, finished programme sales are Hat Trick International's focus in regions where it's too costly to produce the format. The programme has already been sold into Australia, Spain and Iceland ahead of its launch at MIPCOM.



The Real Prime Suspect

Distributor: Orange Smarty

Producer: Monster Films

Broadcaster: CBS Reality (UK)

Logline: The real-life inspiration behind *Prime Suspect* reveals what it takes to solve a murder

The Real Prime Suspect is aptly named. This 10-part true crime series is led by Jackie Malton – the first female detective in the Flying Squad, a branch of the Serious and Organised Crime Command in London’s Metropolitan Police Service.

An openly gay woman detective who rose through the ranks of a very male police service, she was the inspiration behind Helen Mirren’s character in the acclaimed drama *Prime Suspect* by Lynda La Plante.

Malton is at the heart of this series, re-examining British and American murder cases. She uses her list of contacts to get access to case files, and to interview the police and detectives at the heart of each investigation, to reveal what it takes to solve a murder.

Orange Smarty head of acquisitions Stella Briley says Malton’s grit, determination and enquiring mind are on show in each episode of this

CBS Reality series, produced by Monster Films. Her approach, says Briley, “gives the viewer a thoroughly authentic perspective on the crimes” and how the perpetrators were caught and brought to justice.

Many of the contributors were initially very wary of taking part, and have refused to be involved in crime shows previously, says Briley. But once the contributors had spoken to Jackie and realised the programmes were going to be told from her perspective, they agreed.

Orange Smarty, led by Karen Young, is an associate producer on this series, which marks its first significant investment in an original commission – a major trend among distributors.

The sales firm has worldwide rights outside the UK, Republic of Ireland, Africa and Poland, where it is TXing on CBS Reality. Deals have already been made in Australia, New Zealand and Scandinavia.

Briley says Orange Smarty is looking to close deals with individual channels as well as pan-regional broadcasters across Europe, Asia and North America.

Unmasking Jihadi John: Anatomy Of A Terrorist

Distributor: Entertainment One (eOne)

Producers: Nutopia in association with Livedrop Media

Broadcasters: HBO (US, Canada), Channel 4 (UK)

Logline: The inside story of Mohammed Emwazi’s journey from an ordinary London boy to one of the most notorious terrorists of all time

It’s now five years since an Isis cell carried out a spate of brutal beheadings in Syria, using social media to distribute videos of the hostage killings to an outraged world.

This single film tells the story of the leader of that cell, charting how an ordinary London boy, Mohammed Emwazi, became Jihadi John, one of the most notorious and hunted terrorists in modern times.

The documentary was made by an accomplished team: *One Strange Rock* producer Nutopia alongside Livedrop Media, run by the security correspondent of *The Sunday Times*, Richard Kerbaj (*My Son The Jihadi*), and triple BAFTA-winning director Anthony Wonke (*Syria: Children Of The Frontline*).

Together, they’ve crafted a film that tells the story of the rise and fall of Isis in Syria, and the impact its ideology had in the West – but through a particular character, Emwazi, who became the poster child for Isis’s brutal regime.

The range of interviewees assembled for the documentary is impressive, including many CIA, Pentagon and British intelligence operatives who were involved in the hunt for Emwazi, as well as surviving hostages, and those who knew him before he became notorious.

What the film does particularly well is reveal the process by which Emwazi, a shy, nervous and rather unpopular school boy in London, was radicalised. “It’s a powerful reminder of the human cost of fanaticism and the systems that are built to combat it,” says Noel Hedges, EVP of acquisitions at eOne, which is handling international sales.

Citing the commissioning broadcasters, Channel 4 and HBO, Hedges says it is a film that would appeal to premium pay-TV and public service broadcasters, but would equally work on a digital platform. “It is a very impactful film with an extremely powerful message and cinematic quality.”



Let's Talk About Sex

Distributor: Cineflix Rights

Producer: Spelthorne Community Television

Broadcaster: Channel 4 (UK)

Logline: Unintentionally funny sex education videos are shown to parents and kids to get an uncensored take

As every kid and parent knows, there are few things more uncomfortable and embarrassing than having to talk together about where babies come from.

Comedy archive series *Let's Talk About Sex* taps right into this universal truth. It presents some outrageous and unintentionally hilarious sex education videos of the past to parents and kids – and then asks them for their take on them, opening up conversations about contraception through to what was considered 'normal' versus the realities for kids today.

Produced by Andrew Newman and Sacha Baron



Cohen's production company Spelthorne Community Television, this young-skewing three-parter debuted on Channel 4 in April with over one million viewers.

It's one of Channel 4's top 10pm shows for 16 to 34-year-olds this year, according to Cineflix Rights VP of acquisitions Kate Laffey.

She says getting the right tone to the series was crucial – having teenagers watch sex education

videos with their parents has the potential to be hilarious and memorable but crude if it goes wrong.

"We wanted the format to be as funny as a sitcom yet as informative as a documentary and we had to find the archive and the cast of adults and their teenage children who could deliver that."

She explains that Cineflix is currently exploring remake opportunities in the US and has

already sold it to Australia's SBS ahead of launch at MIPCOM.

"The beauty of this series is that it works as both a finished tape sale and we see strong format potential as sex education is a universal topic," says Laffey.

Laffey is hoping Cineflix can sell *Let's Talk About Sex* as widely as it can, albeit with caveats. "We will have to take into consideration local sensitivities," she says.

Art Is For Everybody: The Legend Of Keith Haring

Distributor: TVF International

Producer: BBC Studios

Broadcasters: BBC (UK), PBS (US)

Logline: A biopic of artist Keith Haring who blazed a trail in 1980s New York before his untimely death from AIDS aged 31

Next year marks the 30th anniversary of the death of US artist Keith Haring, whose pop art and graffiti-like work grew out of New York's street culture of the 1980s.

To mark the anniversary, the BBC and PBS are co-producing a single 53-minute film about this influential and popular artist whose life was cut short by AIDS at just 31, leaving behind an iconic body of work that today is splashed across T-shirts, music albums and all kinds of

homeware items.

Art Is For Everybody: The Legend Of Keith Haring is being produced by Janet Lee at BBC Studios with the same team that won the 2018 Specialist Factual BAFTA for *Basquiat: Rage To Riches*. They've had access, via the Keith Haring Foundation, to a candid and moving conversation that Haring had with his biographer over a five-day period – and this provides the narrative drive for the film, which combines

original and new archive with a hip-hop aesthetic to try to mirror the energy of his art and political activism.

TVF, which also represents *Basquiat: Rage To Riches*, helped raise financing for this Haring biopic to plug a shortfall in the production budget and to fund an international version for distribution.

"Both films are set around the same time in New York, and Haring and Basquiat were close friends," says TVF head of acquisitions Will Stapley, who adds that while this is not a sequel to last year's film, they complement each other well.

"The film is still in production so we will be taking this to MIPCOM as a pre-sale."



How I Created A Cult

Distributor: TCB Media Rights

Producer: Conscious Life

Broadcaster: n/a

Logline: An examination of the inner workings of a cult's formation and growth through exclusive access to the founder

How I Created A Cult is the latest project to be commissioned directly by distributor TCB Media Rights, without any broadcaster involvement.

Billed as a TCB Original, the 3 x 60-minute documentary charts the rise and fall of cult organisation EnlightenNext, whose leader Andrew Cohen seemed to have immense power over his followers before he was outed by a number of them as emotional and physically abusive.

The series draws from 60 hours of original interviews with students and victims, and more than 200 hours of archival footage, alongside interviews with Cohen himself. Along the way, it examines how a cult is formed and grows, and sheds light on the power structures and control mechanisms used to attract and keep followers.

The show was originally pitched to TCB by Spring Films, who had been developing the project with online platform Conscious Life. With footage largely shot and archive fully sourced by the time it came to

TCB, the distributor invested into the post-production of the series. TCB commissioning editor Hannah Demidowicz then worked closely with director Meagan Gibson and the Conscious Life production team to craft the series editorially.

Explaining why TCB invested in the project, Jimmy Humphrey, head of acquisitions and co-productions, says: "We realised that there's an endless fascination into the inner-machinations of cults, and with so many of his former followers talking to camera, a treasure trove of archive, and uniquely a direct interview with Andrew himself, we felt this stood out from the other cult stories on the market."

Humphrey adds that the series has a "premium feel" that can appeal to linear and non-linear broadcasters internationally.

TCB represents worldwide rights for the series. He says an announcement about the project earlier this summer has sparked interest: "We've deliberately been holding material back to do a proper exclusive launch at MIPCOM."



#Anne Frank. Parallel Stories

Distributor: Nexo Digital

Producers: 3D Produzioni and Nexo Digital, in collaboration with Anne Frank Fonds Basel

Broadcaster: n/a

Logline: Oscar-winning actress Helen Mirren retraces the life of Anne Frank through the pages of her diary, and five other women who survived the Holocaust



It's astonishing to think that Anne Frank might still be alive today, had the horrors of the Holocaust not cruelly cut short her life.

To mark what would have been her 90th year (she was born in 1929), this Italian-made 90-minute documentary tells the story of the Jewish teenager's life through the pages of her diary, a text that has made the tragedy of Nazism known to millions of readers all over the world.

Frank's story is intertwined with that of five Holocaust survivors, who were teenage girls just like her: Arianna Szörenyi, Sarah Montard, Helga Weiss and sisters Andra and Tatiana Bucci.

British actress Helen Mirren retraces Frank's story through the words in her diary. The set is a reconstruction of her hiding room in Amsterdam. Meanwhile, off set, a young actress (Martina Gatti) introduces the places that were part of Frank's short life and her feelings.

The film is produced by 3D Produzioni and Nexo Digital and, crucially, has been made with the co-operation of the Anne Frank Fonds Basel, the rights holder to Frank's diary.

"The most important challenge has been to get the rights from the foundation to use Anne Frank's words," says Nexo Digital's head of sales Veronique Commelin. Citing the participation of Mirren, as well as the five Holocaust survivors, Commelin explains that "few projects about the subject have received such endorsement".

#Anne Frank. Parallel Stories will have a limited theatrical release in the US, Canada, the UK and Australia from October 2019. Nexo Digital is looking to sell the documentary worldwide at MIPCOM, except for a handful of territories where it has already sold: the Netherlands, Belgium, Russia, Israel, Italy and Spain. Commelin bills it as a "potential prime-time show" on major TV channels and SVOD platforms.

The Movies

Distributor: Kew Media Distribution

Producers: The Playtone Company and Herzog & Company

Broadcaster: CNN (US)

Logline: A history of American cinemas, as told by some of its biggest on and off-screen stars

There have been many TV series documenting the history of the cinema, but few have come with as many high-profile contributors as this CNN Original series.

Coming from executive producers Tom Hanks, Gary Goetzman and Mark Herzog – the team behind CNN miniseries *The Decades* – it explores American cinema through the decades by combining archive footage and interviews with leading actors, directors, producers, critics and historians.

Among the interview subjects



Photo: Warner Bros./Photofest

in this Hollywood highlights reel are industry luminaries such as Steven Spielberg, Julia Roberts, Tim Burton, Cameron Crowe, Robert de Niro, Morgan Freeman, Ron Howard, Tom Hanks, Angelica Huston, Julianne Moore, Ridley Scott, Sharon Stone – and many more.

“It’s the definitive history of US major theatrical movies,” says Kew Media EVP of sales and distribution Jonathan Ford.

“Through Emmy-winning producers Herzog & Company and the Playtone Company, they have great access to talent.”

Kew Media is handling sales via an ongoing partnership with CNN that sees the London-headquartered distributor selling five series produced with the broadcaster.

The series aired in July and August in the US, running in two-hour weekly instalments

over six episodes in a rather random order of decades.

It started with the Eighties, highlighting films such as *The Empire Strikes Back*, *E.T.*, *Back To The Future*, *When Harry Met Sally* and *Do The Right Thing*, then in subsequent episodes moved on to the Nineties, the Aughties through to the present, then back to the Seventies, Sixties and The Golden Age (1930s to 1950s).

Love Don’t Judge

Distributor: Barcroft Studios

Producer: Barcroft Studios

Broadcaster: n/a

Logline: A TV version of Barcroft’s online series about unconventional relationships

Having been a bite-sized hit on Snapchat, YouTube and Facebook, Barcroft Studios are supersizing *Love Don’t Judge* into a 10 x 60-minute series for television.

Love Don’t Judge takes a close look at ‘less traditional’ relationships. The titles of its short-form episodes give a good clue as to the kinds of relationships that are put under the microscope: “I’m 23, He’s 55 – But He’s Not My Sugar Daddy”, “I Can Be Gay And Muslim”, through to “She’s Not

My Mother, She’s My Wife”.

Each episode sees one unconventional couple prepare to declare their love for one another at a public event. But first they must rally their friends and family to try to convince them to accept their relationship.

Barcroft Studios’ chief creative officer Alex Morris says *Love Don’t Judge* was developed as an “inspiring and uplifting show” that features real couples thriving despite the pressures of the outside world. Morris says Barcroft, which runs its



own popular YouTube channel, could tell from its network’s digital insights that there was a strong audience demand for this kind of show. “We produced this series to specifically leverage authentic emotion and inspiration, areas where we see huge audience response online,”

says Morris.

It’s the latest Barcroft series to have been incubated online, following the success it has had with *Extreme Love* for WE tv in the US, which was developed from Barcroft’s short-form series brand. Barcroft is selling the series to a range of broadcasters.



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Greta's green wave reaches kids' TV

As Greta Thunberg hits the US and Noga Levy-Rapoport beats the drum for climate change, broadcasters and producers are taking notes and brainstorming how best to get the message through to their youngest audiences. Helen Dugdale reports

Junk Rescue empowers kids to be eco-warriors

While teen activists such as Noga Levy-Rapoport and Greta Thunberg take to the podium to shame those in power about what really needs to be done to tackle global green issues, it's the pre-school

market that broadcasters and producers are focusing their attention on when trying to educate the young audience about environmental issues.

Kimberly Dennison, VP of creative development at Gaumont Animation & Family out of the US, believes

now is a great time for kids' television to take up this mantle.

"Kids' media in general has a lineage of addressing environmental concepts. We think there's a great opportunity right now to speak to kids, especially in the global citizen arena, helping them to see the world from a global view and inspire them to get excited about what they can do locally," she says.

Terri Langan, head of Glasgow-based Hello Halo Kids, is behind the CBeebies show *Junk Rescue*, and is quick to sing the praises of the BBC.

"I think CBeebies does a great job. In the past year or so I have seen several of their brands doing episodes that highlight the need to look after the world we live in. *Go Jetters*, *Tee And Mo* and CBBC's *Newsround* have all been great at getting the sustainability message out there."

However, not everyone agrees. Ellen Solberg, head of content at pre-school SVOD Hopster, believes there is very little content that explores environmental issues for younger viewers.

"The issues I've faced finding this type of content for Hopster is that it isn't designed for pre-school as it's too factual and a little too heavy. We're looking for something that is going to tackle the subject and get them motivated about it and not scare them at the same time. So, we're now creating our own content," she reveals.

It's the way you tell the story

For writer and TV producer Martin Baynton, founding partner at Pukeko Pictures and creator of the much-loved TV show *The Wot Wots*, programming that explores issues around the environment and endangered animals needs to be produced in a sensitive manner.

"We shouldn't be knocking kids over the head with it from a very young, crucial age. My approach is to help children celebrate animals and encourage them to fall in love with them, so they see them as equal members of planet Earth," he explains.

"Then, as they grow up, they will naturally start to think about the environment and the ecology that keeps those animals alive. With *The Wot Wots*, I wanted to make the show for co-viewing and get the parents watching and laughing along with their children. There's nothing more inspiring or empowering than mum and dad laughing, as the children think, 'This show must be ok,'" explains Baynton from his office in Wellington, New Zealand.

For creators looking to develop shows tackling climate change and encouraging sustainable living, successful programmes tend to focus on dealing with



simple practical things that young activists can do in their homes instead of focusing on larger global issues.

Hello Halo's *Junk Rescue* is a prime example of a show that empowers the audience and helps them start their journey as an eco-warrior, rather than an eco-worrier.

"*Junk Rescue* makes sustainability fun. It shows how the things we throw away can be repaired, repurposed or transformed into something useful, and encourages the audience to take the lead on what they can make from what they find," says Langan, who got the idea after seeing what people were throwing away at her local rubbish dump.

"It was heart-breaking. It made me think of all of the things [these objects] could have been used for and what sort of example we were setting for kids. I didn't want the series to feel preachy. I wanted children to have fun and be inspired but also learn to see the beauty and value in objects that, whilst they might be worn or beyond repair, could still have a use for someone.

"The mantra of the series is 'it's not junk if someone has a use for it' and children get to see broken or unwanted items transformed into amazing things," she continues.

Pukeko Pictures is seeing great success with its show *Kiddets*, which is a co-production with China, and introduces five new Wot Wots to the world.

"We've created lots of episodes around recycling water and plastic and looking after animals. More and more shows are embracing episodic lines to tell these key issues about early environmental concerns. One reason for this is that it's harder to make shows utterly about the environment that are really uplifting at the moment as it's such a dark space," explains Baynton.

Meanwhile, over at Hopster, the team are creating playlists from their existing slate of shows that tackle topics like recycling – including favourites such as *Earth To Luna* and *The Science Kids* – to make the

Kiddets is a co-production with China

"These young women both have tremendous energy that you can't help being inspired by and they aren't afraid of the comments they get from adults trying to trivialise what they're trying to do"

Terri Langan,
Hello Halo Kids





content easier to find for busy parents.

Solberg is particularly excited about the original content they are creating and hopes it will motivate pre-school kids into doing something themselves.

“We’re delighted to launch *Mr Eco*, who mixes his passion for hip-hop and the environment. His brilliant songs cover littering, recycling and food waste in a fun way. Kids feel really engaged and motivated when watching him. We’re also working on a short-form animation series that looks at environmental issues,” she reveals.

Denise Deane, owner of UK-based Edutainment Licensing is developing a pre-school series called *Tiny Tusks* about eight little eco-warrior elephants and their adventures as they tell stories of climate change, deforestation, ocean pollution and wildlife trafficking in a light and entertaining way.

Recently, Deane has seen a shift in what broadcasters and platforms are looking for when it comes to content dealing with environmental issues and believes the industry is becoming more open to discussions.

“We’ve put *Tiny Tusks* in front of a couple of broadcasters and co-producers and we’re now starting to get people who are willing to embrace the topics the show covers. Previously, it seemed people thought they didn’t really need to be talking to children about these issues but now they’re expressing an interest and accepting that it’s the children who are making the biggest noise,” she says.

Another gentle yet persuasive story that is still in development is *Touch The Earth*, based on *The New York Times*-bestselling children’s book series by Julian Lennon. The story follows a group of friends—Jack,

Touch The Earth is based on Julian Lennon’s book

“Previously, it seemed people thought they didn’t really need to be talking to children about these issues but now they’re expressing an interest and accepting that it’s the children who are making the biggest noise.”

Denise Deane,
Edutainment Licensing



Rosa, Kofi and Ally—as they join Ryder, the magical White Feather, on global adventures to help children fix local problems.

Kimberly Dennison, from Gaumont Animation & Family who are developing the series, believes the stories show children how they can be the ones to change the world, one story at a time.

“We’re combining realistic language about things like clean water and protecting the earth, while inspiring kids to be curious about the world as they join the Feather Friends on their eco-adventures, helping local kids solve local problems. The series will show kids around the world that our actions and choices can make a big difference for the planet,” says Dennison.

Time to listen to the audience

As the winds of change start to sweep across the industry it seems the voices of teen campaigners are welcomed.

Langan from Hello Halo admits it’s people like Levy-Rapoport and Thunberg that give her hope for the future.

“As a child, you’re more likely to listen to and respond to your peers than a ‘boring adult’. These young women both have tremendous energy that you can’t help being inspired by and they aren’t afraid of the comments they get from adults trying to trivialise what they’re trying to do,” she smiles.

The team at Gaumont Animation & Family are delighted to see how Levy-Rapoport and Thunberg are using social media for the greater good and inspiring the next generation to make sure that their voices are heard.

“Young kids see other kids stepping up to a major challenge and can be inspired by them – whether it’s making a change in their home or their communities,” says Dennison.

The investors and those holding the purse strings to production budgets are also having to make changes, as Baynton from Pukeko Pictures highlights.

“Where it’s getting interesting at the moment is that mum and dad investors are now saying, ‘Let’s invest in something that is helping effect climate change’, so you’ve got big businesses suddenly waking up to the fact that their investment base is going to disappear as they focus on renewable fuels and tidying up the planet.”

However, there is also a commercial imperative at hand, explains Baynton. “We’ve got a moral obligation to do this, but it’s also the smart thing to do. The message at MIPCOM needs to be either you’re going to get with this or you’re dead in the water.” **TBI**

LUPIN'S TALES

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The Big Deals

The top sales of children's programming grabbing headlines

ANIMATION



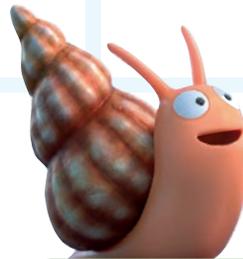
Harry

Amazon Prime Video has acquired animation studio Cosmos-Maya's comedy adventure series *Harry* (26 x 22 minutes)



Gremlins

WarnerMedia has ordered an animated prequel to the 1984 comedy horror film *Gremlins*



The Snail And The Whale

BBC One has scheduled Magic Light Pictures' *The Snail And The Whale* as part of its Christmas line-up



Dino Ranch

Disney Junior has picked up Industrial Brothers and Boat Rocker Studios' animated pre-school series *Dino Ranch* (52 x 11 minutes)



Ricky Zoom

Nick Jr and Channel 5's pre-school block Milkshake have bought Hasbro-owned Entertainment One's *Ricky Zoom*



YouTube

YouTube has pledged to pour \$100m into original children's content over the next three years

ONLINE

The A List

Netflix has swooped for global rights to Kindle Entertainment's teen thriller *The A List* (13 x 30 minutes) following its premiere on BBC iPlayer



Marvel Studios

Disney+ has greenlit three live-action originals from Marvel Studios: *Ms Marvel*, *Moon Knight* and *She-Hulk*



LINEAR



Find Me In Paris

Disney Latin America has picked up three seasons of Cottonwood Media's tween drama *Find Me In Paris* (78 x 30 minutes)

Top Elf

Nickelodeon has greenlit Christmas-themed competition series *Top Elf* (5 x 60 minutes) from Main Event Media and Ugly Brother Studios



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TO HER, IT'S A MINEFIELD.**



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Cartoon Forum: The Highlights Reel



Mousse And Bichon



Super Snail



This year's edition of Cartoon Forum, which ran from 16-19 September, saw 85 projects from 24 countries presented to participants from 39 countries. The Toulouse, France-set event hosted more than 1,000 delegates, including buyers and commissioners from Netflix, WarnerMedia, DreamWorks Animation, Sky, Globosat and HopsterTV.

French projects garnered their share of attention, with highlights including *Mousse And Bichon* (Vivement Lundi!), *Lucy Lost* (Xilam Animation), *Ewilan's Quest* (Andarta Pictures), *Digital Girl* (Cyber Group Studios), *Calamity* (Maybe Movies), *We Are Family* (TeamTO) and *Belfort & Lupin* (Ellipsanime Productions).

Ireland also brought stand-out projects, including the likes of *Critters TV* (Turnip & Duck) and *Pins And Nettles* (Daily Madness Productions), while Belgium's highlights included *Juliette & Jules* (Altitude 100 Production) and *The Marsupilamis* (Belvision), and the Luxembourgish *Quirkistador: Book Of Tales* (ZELT Productions).

Other top projects at Cartoon Forum included Denmark's *Hugo & Holger* (Wil Film); Finland's *MimiMecs* (Ferly) and *Worst Best Friends* (Haruworks); the UK's *Super Snail* (Sixteen South); and Germany's *Spookies* (Wolkenlenker) and *Boots And Paws* (Studio Soi).



Adult appeal



Programming with cross-generational appeal that allow adults to watch along with young viewers was once again in the spotlight in Toulouse. Projects receiving considerable buzz included *We Are Family* (TeamTO), *Le Collège Noir* (Milan Presse) and *Some Of Us* (Bachibouzouk), as well as Spanish project *Sex Symbols* (TV ON Producciones).

Cartoon Tribute winners

Broadcaster of the Year: RTBF's OUFtivi (Belgium)

RTBF's youth channel OUFtivi has become the market leader for French-speaking Belgians, catering especially to 3-12 year-olds.

Investor/Distributor of the Year: Telegael (Ireland)

Telegael is a top investor in premium animated and live-action film and television content. The business runs one of Ireland's largest animation studios. Telegael productions have been licensed to more than 150 territories and translated into more than 40 languages.

Producer of the Year: Panique! (Belgium)

Panique!'s recent credits in animation include *Panique au Village*, *Ernest & Celestine*, *Big Bad Fox And Other Tales* and the formidable *Stinky Dog*. The prodco's latest film *Back To School* won the Jury Award for TV Special at Annecy in 2016.

52x13'

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Viewpoint Halle Stanford

How ‘hopepunk’ content can profit from family viewing

“*The Dark Crystal* is hopepunk because of its loving messaging about coming together to speak out against the baddies and using violence as a last resort. Hopepunk is the trend I hope will emerge as we all start producing family programming.”

Family viewing shaped my career. On Friday nights, we’d snuggle up with my mom and watch *The Muppet Show*. We’d laugh together (sometimes at different jokes), have our favourite Muppets, and bond over this fun, shared experience – an experience that would inspire me, like Kermit the Frog, to go to Hollywood to make people happy.

A year ago, I was in a meeting with Apple television executives and I confessed I was weary of surviving the zombies in *The Walking Dead* and watching women get raped in Westeros. I knew audiences, especially families, were looking for hopeful, meaningful and fun experiences like the ones I had when I was a kid. They absolutely agreed. A lot of broadcasters do, too, because one of the biggest trends we’re seeing in the television industry is the development of family programming.

Network unscripted shows like *The Masked Singer* and *The Voice* have brought in the ratings and attracted family audiences. Services like Apple, Netflix, Disney+, Amazon and HBO Max have made a commitment to family programming. We’re also hearing that pre-school broadcasters are looking for programming that can be ‘co-viewed’. At The Jim Henson Company, we’ve always produced shows that create shared experiences. We celebrate families. I’m proud we created the first blended family in a pre-school series in *Sid The Science Kid* and the first Pteranodon family to proudly adopt a T-Rex in *Dinosaur Train*.

Premium content aimed at families that is story-driven with strong messaging is now in demand. We may be looking at a flood of family programming in the future and the question is, which shows will stand out? The competition is strong and the winners will be those who invest in this genre.

Producers who understand the modern family will be the ones who create the most impactful series.

The television community has a responsibility to get to know the family audience. According to Maria Bailey at family marketing firm BSMMedia, Gen Z is the most racially diverse group in history and has a desire to make a difference in the world. Parents of Gen Z kids are raising their children in an era of school shootings, the Me Too movement and #KeepFamiliesTogether. They’re looking for stories to help them and their family enjoy their time together and also to inspire them to create a safer, healthier and kinder world. Today’s modern family is unique.

After I watched the pilot for Netflix’s *The Dark Crystal: Age Of Resistance* with one of the writers, Simon Racioppa, he congratulated me on the series being ‘hopepunk’. I fell in love with the word instantly. The word was created by writer Alexandra Rowland in a 2017 Tumblr post. She preached hopepunk “says that genuinely and sincerely caring about something, anything, requires bravery and strength”. The punk in hopepunk is making corny cool again. It’s about showing up exactly how you are and encouraging one another to make a change. *The Dark Crystal* is hopepunk because of its loving messaging about coming together to speak out against the baddies and using violence as a last resort. The trend I hope will emerge as we all start producing family programming is hopepunk.

For gatekeepers who also have ratings and subscribers at top of mind, let me give them hope: hopepunk can be profitable. *Star Wars*, *Harry Potter*, *This Is Us*, *Stranger Things* and *Into the Spiderverse* are all hopepunk. Kermit the Frog and The Muppets are the original hopepunkers. These are the types of series we are developing right now at The Jim Henson Company – positive, innovative and with spirit. We’re storytellers and I see it as our job to inspire our audiences. We all have a gift to make a difference. And, as Kermit reminds us: “That’s the kind of dream that gets better the more people you share it with.” **TBI**

Halle Stanford is president of TV at The Jim Henson Company

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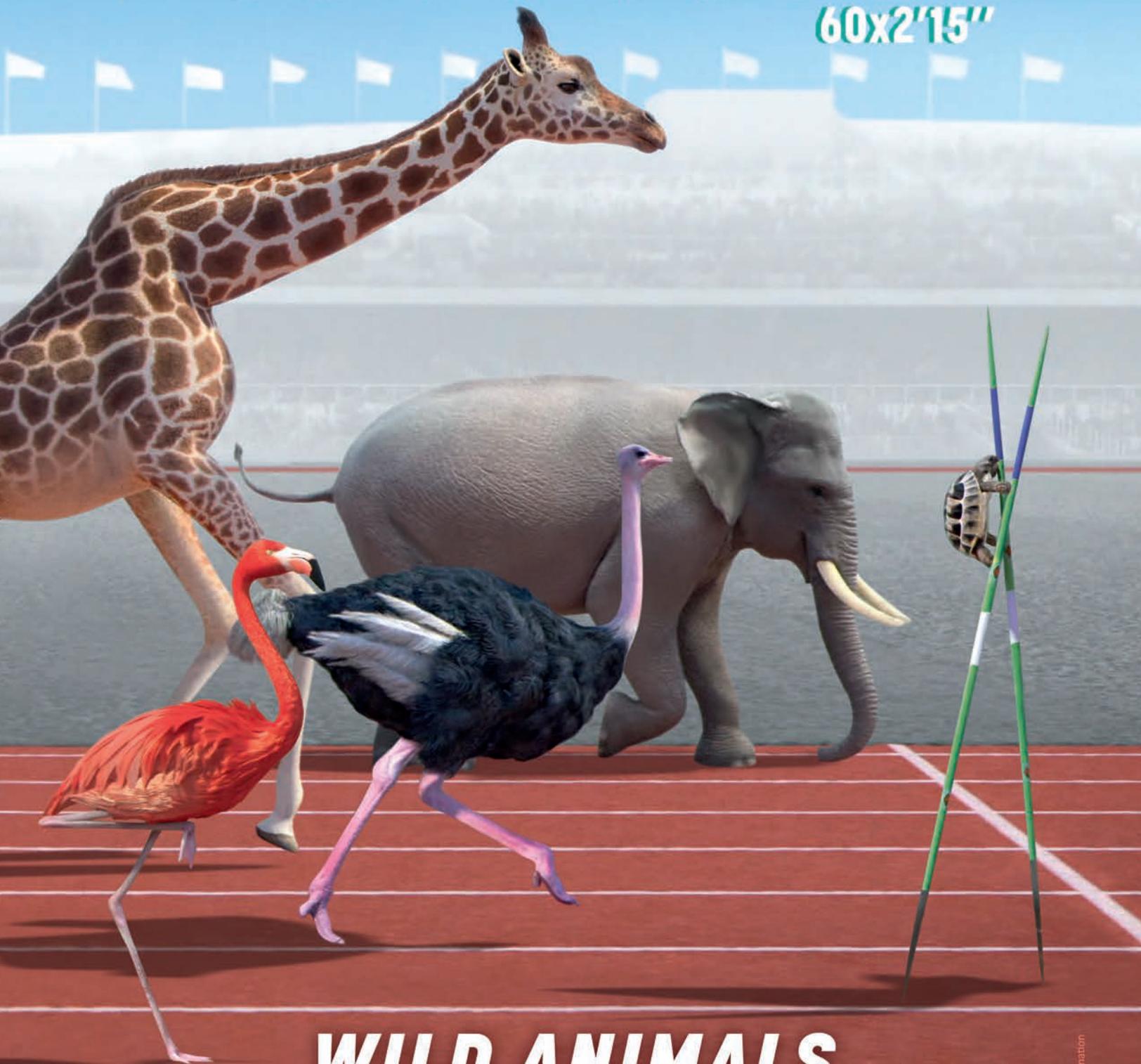
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Choosing their own adventures

As interactive and voice-activated programming grows in popularity among kids, Helen Dugdale examines how new tech is affecting the consumption patterns of young audiences

Media headlines are awash with how children and teens are choosing to consume their favourite shows. Young people, with strong ideas of their own, are embracing the speedy developments in tech and increasing number of platforms for viewing, gaming and engaging with content.

Citing a recent Kids Insights report on kids' behaviours, Nick Richardson, CEO and founder of the market intelligence outfit, has some ideas on what they're really up to when staring at their devices.

"Technology is playing a far greater role in taking up children's time. They are now doing a lot more with tech friendlier games, using it to unlock more content.

"Most parents these days essentially grew up in a world that was more linear with regards to content and tech. While we had to wait until the next day or next week to watch the next episode, we're seeing

that lack of linearity is changing habits, with the use of technology, but also in that the content they're watching doesn't need to be new."

Morgann Favennec, EVP of global sales development at Xilam Animation, agrees with the research, as evidenced by the trajectory of one of their bestselling programmes.

"Our hit series *Oggy And The Cockroaches* first aired 20 years ago and has never been as popular as it is today, proving that comedy travels well internationally and remains timeless as we see different generations now watching and enjoying the show together. Across all genres, high-quality production will always make a difference in the longevity of your content and help it cut through the market," says Favennec.

With so many different options around what to watch and how to consume it, for parents it can seem that young viewers are managing to sidestep the eyes

Puss In Boots: Trapped In An Epic Tale was one of Netflix's first interactive offerings



and voice of authority and do exactly what they please.

However, Kids Insights research offers some peace of mind as it shows that parents now have more control, as the number of kids binge-watching TV is decreasing, as Richardson explains:

“On average a UK child would watch three shows back to back, but this has reduced significantly year on year, from only 2% of kids in 2016 watching one episode at a time to 18% in 2017,” he says.

Kids now watch on average one to two episodes, rather than three to four a year ago, says Richardson.

“That’s because the awareness of binge-watching and the concerns of effects on health have been covered widely in mainstream media. Parents’ attitudes have changed, and many manufacturers have now put safeguards in place, which means that a parent can control how much content a child can consume through automation, instead of manually having to be there. That’s not to say that it’s not still an issue, but in our data, we’re seeing a big reduction in bingeing due to an increase in knowledge from parents and changes in technology making parents’ lives easier.”

The future is gamification

From the tween viewer to the more mature young adult, most members of these demographics will have sampled the delights of what interactive content can offer after watching the likes of Netflix’s Bear Grylls-fronted live-action series *You vs. Wild*, *Puss In Boots: Trapped In An Epic Tale* and *Black Mirror: Bandersnatch*. The buzz word on the street is gamification.

“We’re now seeing the gamification of content has increased significantly,” says Richardson.

“Augmented reality is also going to be a growth opportunity and the kids are calling for it. They have this expectation that they will control what they’re watching, and they want to be able to have an impact. The story doesn’t have to be the way the story is. Being able to twist it to suit themselves is all part of the bigger trend of personalisation that we’ll see more of in 2020.”

As with any personalised content, there is a greater chance the young audience will interact with it for longer, talk about it more and explore all the different variants that it offers. However, the repeated use of the same content poses a risk to independent production companies or creators who are trying to get their stories through.

Anish Mehta, CEO at animation company Cosmos-Maya, believes that creators must embrace

“Kids have this expectation that they will control what they’re watching, and they want to be able to have an impact. The story doesn’t have to be the way the story is. Being able to twist it to suit themselves is all part of the bigger trend of personalisation.”

Nick Richardson,
Kids Insights



of kids watched one episode at a time in 2017, over 2% in 2016

the swiftly changing landscape.

“There is no denying the KGOY (Kids Getting Older Younger) phenomenon. Children nowadays have access to umpteen number of platforms to entertain themselves. Hence, the onus lies on the content creator to produce quality, conscientious content. It is an opportunity as well as a responsibility.”

Bruno Felix, co-founder and MD of Amsterdam transmedia production house Submarine, suggests that content creators should learn to adapt quickly to the new offerings and understand their specific needs.

“It’s challenging for sure, but at the same time it is great, because as a content creator you also see the kids changing their relationship to the different services and therefore playing, viewing and interacting in different ways. These new viewing options obviously give opportunities to tell stories in different ways and keep the mind of a creator young and active.”

Using their voice

No one can deny the world of kids’ content and the platforms that exist inside the industry are changing at lightning speed. James Poulter, CEO of London-based Vixen Labs, a leading voice consultancy, has seen first-hand the way that Generation Z has taken to voice-activated gadgets.

“Voice applications and audio content more generally are gaining real traction as parents seek alternatives to screen time, particularly in the morning routines and bedtime hours. Smart speaker adoption is giving kids themselves access to far greater choice in what to listen to and play with, as well as access to knowledge and facts, as these devices are far cheaper and present less stress for parents.”

Poulter believes this is one of the biggest potential growth markets for kids IP owners in the next 24 months “as kids and parents are in exploration mode, looking for new content and brands to engage with via voice”.

Anyone writing a marketing plan at the beginning of 2019 probably wouldn’t have listed TikTok as a serious contender for grabbing attention, but as Richardson concludes, it’s hard to plan for who or what will be the next big thing.

“At the beginning of the year, TikTok was nowhere in our data. Then in our research, from January to August 2019, it has gone on to be the second favourite app with girls aged 10-12 years, just behind YouTube. Netflix, WhatsApp and Roblox are also among the top five apps for 10-12s, which shows why data is so vital. You can react to it.” **TBI**

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Kids Hot Picks

The very best children's content hitting the Croisette





Top Pick

Superhero Kindergarten

Distributor: Genius Brands International

Producers: Genius Brands, POW! Entertainment, Oak Productions

Broadcaster: n/a

Logline: A former superhero-turned-kindergarten teacher oversees a class of secret superheroes

Arnold Schwarzenegger and Stan Lee often talked about potential collaborations over the years, according to the actor and former governor.

During one conversation, *The Terminator* and *Twins* star mentioned he'd love to do a sequel to his 1990 movie *Kindergarten Cop*, which features a tough cop who goes undercover in a nursery to locate a ruthless drug lord's ex-wife.

Shortly afterwards, Lee called up the action hero and asked what he thought about doing an animated series that shared some similarities to his cop movie, but with a twist: the teacher would be a former superhero, and his students would be five-year-olds with superpowers.

Lee passed away last November before he could see one of his final ideas come into fruition, but Genius Brands, Stan Lee's POW! Entertainment and Schwarzenegger's Oak Productions have now picked up the mantle.

The 52 x 11-minute *Superhero Kindergarten* – which does not yet have a release date – is making its debut in the international market at MIPCOM this month and is being penned by *Deadpool* co-creator Fabian Nicieza.

The 2D animated series aimed at four to seven-year-olds focuses on Arnold Armstrong, a former gym teacher who turned superhero after inhaling some ionic dust left in the wake of a mysterious comet.

After decades of saving the planet Arnold is forced to expend his power in a final battle against his arch nemesis. He then falls back on teaching, albeit as a kindergarten teacher to a group of five-year-olds with rumoured superpowers.

Schwarzenegger, who lends his voice to the series' protagonist, serves as executive producer along with Genius Brands' chairman and chief exec Andy Heyward and POW! Entertainment president Gill Champion.

While the property's entertainment value is clear, Schwarzenegger appears equally as enthusiastic about its health and well-being messages.

"Of particular pride to me is the fact that I am not only teaching kids to use their superpowers, but I am also imparting valuable lessons about the importance of health, exercise and nutrition," he says.

Genius Brands International will be distributing the series and the property also fits into its "content with a purpose" brand portfolio, which includes

toddler brand Baby Genius, adventure comedy *STEM* series, Thomas Edison's *Secret Lab* and financial literacy and entrepreneurship series *Warren Buffett's Secret Millionaires Club*.

The firm's content catalogue also includes another animated Stan Lee/POW! Entertainment series, *Cosmic Crusaders*. States POW!'s Champion: "Stan Lee's *Superhero Kindergarten* was near and dear to his heart, working with one of his longtime collaborators Andy Heyward, as well as Arnold, and we look forward to continuing the partnership with Genius Brands to bring Stan's vision for this new adventure series to life."

POW! Entertainment is now owned by Chinese branding and licensing giant Camsing International Holding Limited.

While Lee might not be around to appreciate the end results of this creation, as homage to the comic book legend, he will appear as a cameo in every episode. Heyward says: "Just as his millions of fans look forward to seeing him appear in each Marvel film, they will look forward to his presence in each episode of this cartoon. It will make it a series that parents will enjoy alongside their children."

Schwarzenegger is also gearing up for this autumn's US release of *Terminator Dark Fate*, which the animation could also benefit from as parents start to reacquire themselves with the franchise.

Seal Force 5

Distributor: Hoho Rights

Producer: Hoho Entertainment

Broadcaster: n/a

Logline: Five arctic seals, mutated into humanoid form, assemble as an elite special forces fighting ecological villainy

Speaking of his search to find the right animal for Caldera Creations' first vehicle, aimed at 6 to 10-year-olds, creator Paul Caldera reveals why seals were the answer.

He says: "We were looking for an animal that is both adorable and funny yet also fit for action, but isn't already a pop culture icon – and seals were the perfect choice.

"From there, the idea of using seals as Navy SEALs seemed like a readymade match for the action/comedy animation genre."

The resulting show, *Seal Force 5* (26 x 22 minutes), features five arctic seals, mysteriously mutated into humanoid form, who assemble as an elite special forces team to prevent a shadowy cabal from pushing the world to the edge of ecological collapse.

Each episode is self-contained but with a longer series narrative arc featuring the bad guys, which slowly gets revealed as the show progresses.

While a broadcaster is not yet

attached, Hoho Entertainment helped the fledgling company bring its idea to fruition and has come on board as the series' producer.

The firm's distribution arm Hoho Rights is now on the lookout for broadcast and co-production partners at MIP Junior and MIPCOM.

Oliver Ellis, Hoho's joint MD, claims that the series has all the ingredients for a fun, action-packed show for older kids.

"The international market has been saying they are looking for older children's fare for some time. This is now the time for broadcasters to get on board early with a comedy adventure series with global appeal."

Ellis describes the seals' nemesis, The Evil Order of Eden, as "a bit like James Bond's Spectre but with a malicious environmental intent".

Ellis believes that with environmental issues topping the list of kids' concerns, this series will also strike a chord with its audience with a real call to action.



#DeliciousMax

Distributor: MK Media Group

Producer: Svoya Production

Broadcaster: n/a

Logline: Crafted like a vlog, food enthusiast Max delves into famous foods that cater to an 8 to 14-year-old demo



#DeliciousMax is an animated edutainment series from Ukrainian producer Svoya Production that showcases the history of some of the world's most loved foods – as seen through the lens of younger teens.

The main character is 15-year-old Portuguese vlogger Max who has his own culinary channel. Each 10-minute episode sees Max talk about famous foods that are bound to go down well with the series' target audience of 8 to 14-year-olds: spaghetti, hamburgers, sushi, ice cream, pizza, French fries, pancakes, popcorn and even chewing gum.

Crafted like an online vlog, each show covers general information about the food followed by its history, while the remaining segment is a chatroom dedicated to Max answering viewers' questions about cooking specifics and eating.

The series is related to another internationally focused Svoya production, *Who's There?*, which takes a

humorous look at different countries around the world.

Now in its second season, 12 local video vloggers, each with their own specialty, have been introduced in the *Who's There?* format. Max pops up in that, too, and while his area is food, other vloggers include an Australian into astrology and a Singaporean boy interested in high tech. Svoya's plan is to make a season per blogger.

The first episode of *#DeliciousMax* (12 x 10 minutes), which explores spaghetti, has already been delivered, and while a broadcaster is not yet attached, Canadian distributor MK Media is the international distributor. It has been focusing increasingly on edutainment titles, according to the firm's head of sales Anna Verbovska, and the distributor loves the modern approach taken by this series.

"It's a mix of blogging and TV. A broadcaster can share *#DeliciousMax* for TV viewers and offer the same content for its online channels," she says.

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Odo

Distributor: Sixteen South Rights
Producer: Sixteen South, Letko
Broadcaster: n/a
Logline: A gender-neutral little owl is prone to getting in trouble joins other small birds in daily

Based on the book by Oliver Austria, *Odo* is a gender-neutral owl who joins other little birds for the day's tasks at forest camp. When things go wrong, Odo always wants to put them right, which often causes things to snowball out of control.

Belfast animation outfit Sixteen South – which is producing as well as distributing the property via its new sister company – is encouraging international broadcasters to choose for themselves whether Odo should be male or female. Or neither.

“To us, Odo’s just Odo,” says Sixteen South’s creative director Colin Williams, who created the series with Emmy-nominated



kids TV writer and script editor Sam Barlow, with artwork supplied by 2D artist Alena Tkech.

Williams adds that the series also promotes self-belief in pre-schoolers as well as dealing with important themes such as immigration and respect for others.

Animated at Sixteen South and Polish 2D animation studio

Letko, Williams describes the look as 2D with 3D lighting and camera effects.

“We’re calling it 2.5D,” he explains. “We didn’t want to create a 3D CGI show but wanted the theatre of 2D and added some new techniques involving depth of field and 3D lighting into the 2D world to really make everything pop.”

While there are no

broadcasters attached, Williams says Sixteen South Rights has already completed “a significant amount of deals on the show” that it plans to announce shortly.

Summing up, Williams says: “Odo has had a brilliant reaction from the market. It’s a truly beautiful-looking show with a cute lead gender-neutral character who believes they can do anything.”

Kids Safari

Distributor: West One International
Producer: Lion Mountain Media
Broadcaster: n/a
Logline: A mix of live-action and 2D animation sees kids exploring the most amazing places on Earth

Created by Peter Lamberti, founder and chief executive of Lion Mountain Media, this series was inspired by his young children Luca and Melua, who travel with their parents making wildlife films.

Viewers are invited to join the 8 and 10-year-olds on a wild journey of discovery as they explore some of the most spectacular places on earth.

Shot in 4K across the US and Africa, this family series, aimed at eight-year-olds and upwards,

is a mix of live-action and 2D animation.

Locations range from the rolling savannahs of the African bush, to the Pacific Ocean, the Rocky Mountains in the US, the jungles of Madagascar and the towering sand dunes of the world’s oldest desert.

Carl Hall, MD of West One International, which is distributing the 36 x 12-minute series, believes that the series is “one of a kind”.

He adds: “There’s loads of

interesting and daring content including the two main children entering a shark cage with great whites circling – a first for a kids’ TV series.

“The series really gets up close

and personal with nature and we feel strongly that there hasn’t been a kids show like this on offer before,” he adds.

The series is seeking broadcast partners in Cannes.



Lupin's Tales

Distributor: Xilam Animation

Producer: Xilam Animation

Broadcaster: France Télévisions

Logline: A little wolf dreams of becoming a fairytale hero, but makes a terrible mess



Inverting the classic ‘big bad wolf’ trope, this animated series from Xilam follows the adventures of Lupin, a tiny wolf who dreams of becoming a fairytale hero.

Lupin sneaks into classic stories, taking on the heroes’ identities, convinced that he can do things just as well. The problem is that he’s still an impulsive little wolf who insists on doing things his own way, and creates a terrible mess.

With guidance from the show’s narrator, Lupin is willing to fix his mistakes and seal a happy ending as he journeys through medieval Europe, Greek and Nordic myths and Asian tales.

Aimed at upper pre-schoolers, the show was jointly created by Laura Muller – whose credits include Xilam’s *Mr Magoo* and *Zig & Sharko* – and Nicolas Le Névé, the director of another Xilam property, *Oggy And The Cockroaches*.

Muller also shares directorial reins with Antoine Colomb, whose previous credits include Xilam’s *Moka*.

France Télévisions commissioned the show, which is set to air next autumn, with Xilam already securing pre-sales with Rai in Italy and VRT in Belgium. The first episode will be presented at MIP Junior this year.

The series uses a mix of 2D and 3D to create a unique pop-up book-like aesthetic – a technique adopted, according to Xilam Animation head Marc du Pontavice, to enable kids to feel as though “they can imagine and create a whole world from a simple piece of paper”.

Xilam expects the 78 x 7-minute series to do well globally as episodes cover tales from regions such as Asia, Northern Europe, Latin America and Africa. The animation producer-distributor will target broadcasters and platforms.

Blue’s Clues & You!

Distributor: Viacom International Studios

Producer: Nickelodeon Animated Studios, Brown Bag Films, Out of the Blue Enterprises

Broadcaster: Nick Jr. (US)

Logline: A reimagining of the beloved 1990s blue-spotted dog Blue

Nickelodeon’s 1996 curriculum-driven interactive series *Blue’s Clues* followed an animated blue-spotted dog called Blue as she left a trail of clues/paw prints for the host and the viewers, to figure out her plans for the day.

Combining concepts from child development and early-childhood education with innovative animation and production techniques that helped viewers learn, the original incarnation became the highest-rated show for pre-schoolers on US commercial television.

The part live-action part animated series was syndicated in 120 countries and translated into 15 languages, becoming the longest-running Nick Jr. series until it was surpassed by *Dora The Explorer* in 2011.

The new series is a ‘reimagining’ for a new generation of pre-schoolers by its original creators, Traci Paige

Johnson, Todd Kessler and Angela C. Santomero

Now called *Blue’s Clues & You!* (20 x 30 minutes), it will feature new elements alongside refreshed iconic items from the original series – including new CG-animation for Blue and Magenta, provided by Dublin-based Brown Bag Film’s Toronto studios, as well as several new characters.

The show’s new Filipino host Joshua Dela Cruz has already been declared “a grade-A hottie” by fans on Twitter, according to Huff Post, and distributor Viacom International Studios expects the programme to perform strongly in markets with a local host. “We’re in the initial phases of exploring which territories would be most effective and looking at potential hosts,” says Lauren Marriott, Viacom’s VP of International programme sales.



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Kingdom Force

Distributor: Boat Rocker Studios

Producer: Industrial Brothers, Boat Rocker Studios

Broadcaster: CBC (Canada)

Logline: Five animal heroes must band together to protect the citizens of various kingdoms

Described as a ‘high-octane animated action show’ aimed at older pre-schoolers, *Kingdom Force* follows the exploits of five animal heroes who must serve and protect the citizens of their different kingdoms.

The kings are supported by a fearless wolf leader, Luka, and their rescue vehicles, which can transform into a giant super-robot called Alpha-Mech.

This 52 x 11-minute 3D animated series, set to debut on CBC this autumn, was created by Industrial Brothers co-founder Matt Fernandes, whose credits include The Jim Henson Company’s show *Dot* and Industrial Brothers’ own



properties *Top Wing*, *Yup Yups* and *Gummandos*.

Animated at Industrial Brothers and Canadian animation and VFX house Jam Filled Entertainment, *Kingdom Force* combines children’s love of action heroes, animals and vehicles as well as championing

diversity, according to Boat Rocker Studios.

The distributor’s MD Jon Rutherford explains: “Each of our heroes comes from a different Kingdom with their own cultures and traditions but when they combine their individual strengths to help

save ‘animal kind’ and unite to become Kingdom Force, the team is unbreakable,” he says.

Rutherford adds that Boat Rocker has secured “significant” sales with leading international broadcasters across a number of territories and will be holding further discussions.



Touch The Earth

Distributor: Gaumont

Producer: Gaumont

Broadcaster: n/a

Logline: Four international friends join forces in ecological adventures

Based on Julian Lennon and his children’s book collaborator Bart Davis’s trio of *New York Times*-bestselling books, *Touch The Earth* aims to inspire

children around the world to become eco-warriors and promote sustainability.

Lennon and Davis are executive producers on the

series, which is being made through Gaumont Animation in collaboration with its president Nicolas Atlan, and Terry Kalagian, SVP of creative development.

The story follows four friends – UK-born Jack, Venezuelan Rosa, Ghanaian Kofi and American Ally – as they join Ryder, an Earth Spirit in the form of a magical White Feather airplane, on adventures around the globe.

Themes of environmentalism and social issues run through the series, and, on their expeditions, the characters help other kids solve problems local to their region.

These involve lending a hand to a stranded elephant in Africa, diving into a beach clean-up

in India, and planting a fresh vegetable garden at a newly built school in New York.

“*Touch The Earth* will inspire children everywhere to make a difference and show them how they can be the ones to change the world, one story at a time,” says Kalagian.

The series is comprised of a CGI-animated story featuring the main characters with a factual, live-action segment at the end of each episode profiling children who have made a difference, including Greta Thunberg, Ryan Hickman, Gitanjali Rao, Leroy Mwasaru and Richard Turere.

Currently in development, there are no broadcasters attached to the global-facing 52 x 11-minute series.



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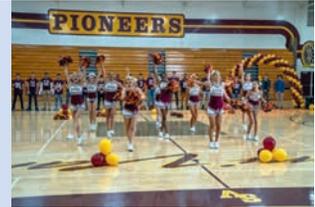
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Damian Lewis: Spy Wars Episodes 8x60' **Genre** Docu-drama **Synopsis** Award-winning actor Damian Lewis unpacks covert modern-day missions with the help of new declassified information, high-profile experts, and intelligence officers who were there.



Generation Dating Episodes Pilot 60' **Genre** Format **Synopsis** Romance gets a reboot in Generation Dating. In a world of disposable dating, what would happen if two strangers, one old and one young, ran each other's love lives?



The Secret Lives of Cheerleaders Episodes 1x120' **Genre** Movie **Synopsis** Gifted cheerleader Ava is an instant hit at her new school, but her popularity is threatened by the rivalry of cheer captain and Homecoming Queen Katrina.

Hot Properties Q&A: Richard Tulk-Hart, Managing Director, International Content Distribution + Co-productions

Damian Lewis fronting Spy Wars will likely encourage a broader set of viewers to watch the show, what does he add to the series from a production point of view?

Working with one of the biggest actors in the business, who has shown major enthusiasm for this intriguing subject matter, gives our production a greater degree of legitimacy. It allows us to deliver historical facts from a spokesperson entrenched in our modern-day zeitgeist to a pre-aware, enthusiastic audience.

Relationship formats have enjoyed something of a resurgence over recent years, what sets Generation Dating apart from others?

What sets Generation Dating apart is the fact that, although it's a dating format, it is also so much more. It brings two very different generations together to help each other find new ways to look for love and think about what it means to build a relationship. The two main participants are paired together, but not as a couple –

rather – as “personal dating coaches.” Whereas in most dating formats, there is one pay-off: a date, but in Generation Dating, there are many levels of entertainment and pay-off for the viewers and participants alike.

With the competitiveness of scripted TV at present, how can TV movies such as The Secret Lives Of Cheerleaders cut through?

We create content that matters by going out into the community and asking women what stories they want to tell, what characters they want to play, and provide an unbelievable platform to make that happen. That is why we are among the world's biggest distributors of TV Movies whose legacy continues to build.



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The Feed Episodes 10x60' **Genre** Drama **Synopsis** Liberty Global and Amazon Prime introduce Channing Powell's psychological thriller about a family forced to control a technology they created when its users turn murderous.



Van der Valk Episodes 3x120' **Genre** Drama **Synopsis** This sleek well-paced detective procedural filmed in Amsterdam stars Marc Warren as the eponymous Commissaris Van der Valk.



Eddie Eats America Episodes 12x30' **Genre** Factual Entertainment **Synopsis** World's Strongest Man winner, Eddie 'The Beast' Hall takes on the most calorific country on earth: can Eddie conquer America, one meal at a time?

Hot Properties Q&A: Attributed to Maartje Horchner – EVP Content

The Feed looks set to explore some dark but timely topics, tell us a little about the impact of the technology in the show and why you think the series will do perform in today's drama-laden landscape?

Technology is evolving at a rate like never before and The Feed asks crucial questions about the impact it's having on society, both positive and negative. By imagining a world in which technology becomes murderous viewers are forced to ask themselves 'how dependent are we on technology?' The Feed is a hugely ambitious show, with a stellar cast and a timely thought-provoking issue at its centre.

The Benelux has become a scripted hot spot over the past year or so, what is it about Van Der Valk and other shows from this part of the world that seems to resonate further afield?

Amsterdam is a great backdrop, beautiful and complex. Both VAN DER VALK and BAPTISTE are set there and show diverse cityscapes that add intrigue. Commercially

the Benelux are an interesting place to shoot due to funds and tax shelter structures making it financially, very attractive.

Talent-led shows that involve food seem to be enjoying a boom at present, what does Eddie Hall bring to this show? And what was his biggest culinary challenge on the show?

Eddie is a huge character who is warm and charming, he has been a joy to work with. His eagerness to learn and understand about food knows no bounds and he has taken on the food challenges with gusto. Eddie's affable nature opened many doors and has been great with the American contributors. The strong man element in each episode, which was always editorially relevant to the location, was a unique addition to the series and has made it stand out for the international market.



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Witches of Salem Episodes 4x60' HD

Genre History **Synopsis** This four-part series draws on historical documents to bring the gripping drama of the Salem Witch Trials to life.



Big Cat Country Episodes 6x60'

HDR 4K+ HD **Genre** Natural History

Synopsis In the heart of Zambia's Luangwa Valley, three lion prides collide. A wildlife camera team gets caught up in the action as they follow the lions day and night.



The Killer in My Family Episodes

6x60' HD **Genre** Factual, Crime

Synopsis This gripping series examines crimes through the lens of a killer's family, mixing horrific details and happy memories with a very personal point of view.

Hot Properties Q&A: Solange Attwood, EVP, Blue Ant International

What is unique about Big Cat Country as natural history series?

Big Cat Country is unique in that the story-telling is truly character led. Viewers experience how each lion's relationships and actions affects its social hierarchy within the pride.

How are historical documents integrated into The Witches Of Salem?

The entire series was based on actual historical transcripts recorded during the trials in Salem, which are referenced during expert interviews and dramatic reenactments in the four-part series.

What might surprise audiences about Killer In My Family?

This series takes a point of view that is rarely explored in a crime series - the devastation dealt to families of both the victims and the killers. Often when we think about killers it so easy to forget that they have families too, people who

loved them and had their entire worlds torn apart when they found out that their loved one is a killer.

Why does the story behind Salem still resonate?

Witches of Salem still resonates because it taps into the cultural zeitgeist, by exploring themes of mass hysteria and the impact on people who are most marginalized.



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West of Liberty Episodes 6x60' **Genre**

Crime Thriller **Synopsis** Former Stasi agent and CIA informant Ludwig Licht is dragged back into the darkest corners of the intelligence world.



Little Dog Episodes Season 1: 7x30'

Season 2: 8x30' **Genre** Comedy

Synopsis Washed up pro boxer "Little Dog" Ross embarks on one last attempt to prove his worth in this raunchy new comedy.



The Cat And The Moon Episodes

Full-length feature film - 108' **Genre** Drama **Synopsis** Nick (Wolff) comes to NYC to stay with Cal (Mike Epps), an old friend of his late father's and makes friends who show him the city.

Hot Properties Q&A: Danny Fisher, CEO, FilmRise

What makes Little Dog a compelling redemption story?

Tommy "Little Dog" Ross is a washed-up boxer who walked away from his last important match and has been on the skids ever since. His opportunity for a rematch with his old rival could be just what he needs to get himself back in the game - on every level.

Is Cat And The Moon an homage to New York?

In The Cat and the Moon, New York is as much character as location. The protagonist moves to the city as a teenager and his life in the city affects his personal growth. His multi-dimensional experiences will change how he sees things for the rest of his life.

How do historical elements elevate West Of Liberty?

West of Liberty takes place in the years after the Cold War - but the world of the

double agent still exists, it is merely more covert and less predictable. The action of the series moves around the world, from Berlin to Marrakesh and Sweden.



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Touch the Earth Episodes 52x11'
Genre CG-Animated Eco Adventure
Synopsis Based on the book series by Julian Lennon & Bart Davis, a group of international friends join a magical White Feather on global adventures to help make our world a better place!



The Royal Family Episodes 52x11'
Genre 2D Animated Comedy
Synopsis Based on the book series "La Famille Royale" by Christophe Mauri and Aurore Damant, a modern day royal family is eager to explore the extraordinarily ordinary discoveries of everyday life.



Bionic Max Episodes 52x11' **Genre** 2D Animated Buddy Comedy
Synopsis A malfunctioning bionic guinea pig and his goldfish buddy escape from their laboratory into Woodchuck Woods and must learn to adapt in this urban jungle.

Hot Properties Q&A: Nicolas Atlan, President, Gaumont Animation & Family

Environment-focused series have surged in popularity over the past 12 months, what makes Touch The Earth stand out?

Julian Lennon has long been an advocate for environmental awareness. He wanted to speak to the next generation and decided to create a book series with Bart Davis. The show—based on the three books in the series—Touch the Earth, Heal the Earth and Love the Earth, which are all New York times bestsellers, and are ranked in Amazon's top 100 books—is inspired by the work he is already doing. The series will show kids around the world that our actions and choices can make a big difference for the planet.

What was it about the La Famille Royale book series by Christophe Mauri and Aurore Damant that made you think it would be good source material for a TV adaptation?

We've been tracking the property for quite a while, and after the latest book release,

the fifth in the series, we felt we had to make a move. We love its sweet, fun humor, fun stories and gorgeous art, and felt that it could very well be adapted to an animated series. At its heart, it is a family sitcom. . .the family just happens to be royals. "La Famille Royale – Vacances en Chateau Pliable" (Holidays in a Foldable Castle) won the The Prix des Embouquineurs award in 2018—the French national award given by young readers.

It's not often one crosses paths with a malfunctioning bionic guinea pig. Tell us about Bionic Max and this unique character's role in the show.

Bionic Max, created and directed by the talented Thomas Digard, takes the beloved buddy comedy and amps it up with a colorful vibrant palette and laugh-out-loud slapstick comedy that transcends regional barriers. The series follows the daily adventures of a bionic guinea pig who often mishandles his bionic powers and his goldfish best friend who tries to harness those powers for good. . .sometimes. . .



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Worzel Gummidge Episodes 2x60'
Genre Drama Specials
Synopsis Inspired by the classic novels from author Barbara Euphan Todd, Worzel Gummidge is the treasured tale of a witty, mischievous scarecrow who mysteriously comes to life.



Cold Call Episodes 4x60' or 2x90' **Genre** Drama Mini-Series
Synopsis Set in Manchester, Cold Call tells the story of June, the victim of a cold call fraud that destroys her family's future.



The Movies Episodes 12x60' or 6x120'
Genre Documentary Series
Synopsis The Movies explores American cinema through the decades and the cultural, societal and political shifts that framed its evolution.

Hot Properties Q&A

What was the most challenging aspect of adapting the beloved Gummidge books?

"The first Worzel Gummidge book was written in 1935 and though the characters and world of Scatterbrook still endure, a lot of the stories are very of-their-time and a little dated.

My challenge was to bring the stories up to date whilst staying faithful to the irreverent, mischievous spirit of the books." *Mackenzie Crook (writer, director and star of Worzel Gummidge)*

In what ways does the Northern England setting elevate Cold Call?

"Setting Cold Call in Manchester allowed us to depict very quickly the "have and have nots" in the series. June's world, set in East Manchester, is run down and struggling to get by whereas Kirk's world, in South Manchester, is affluent, imposing and successful. Or so it seems." *Rebecca Davies (producer, Cold Call)*

Who are some of the interviewees included in The Movies?

Paul Thomas Anderson, Alec Baldwin, Ellen Burstyn, Tim Burton, Cameron Crowe, Billy Crystal, Robert De Niro, Jon Favreau, Antoine Fuqua, Morgan Freeman, Bill Hader, Tom Hanks, Amy Heckerling, Ron Howard, Holly Hunter, Anjelica Huston, Baz Luhrmann, Julianne Moore, Ed Norton, Rob Reiner, Molly Ringwald, Maya Rudolph, Ridley Scott, John Singleton, Sharon Stone, Robert Zemeckis, Julia Roberts, Steven Spielberg and many more.

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Professionals Episodes 10x60' **Genre** Action **Synopsis** Enter a world of billionaires using their wealth to deploy private military units to achieve their political and business goals.



The Name of the Rose Episodes 8x60' **Genre** Thriller, Literature **Synopsis** A suspenseful crime thriller set in an intriguing and gloomy medieval world with a modern take and new details to a multi-layered story.



Lara Croft: Tomb Raider Episodes 1x101' **Genre** Action **Synopsis** More action than Indiana Jones and more cunning than 007: Academy Award®-winner Angelina Jolie is Lara Croft, the world's most famous adventure-games heroine.

Hot Properties Q&A: Giannina Antola, Head of International Sales

What type of viewer will engage with Professionals and what are some of the standout themes from the show?

Professionals is an adrenalin-fueled, fast-paced action series that deals with serious issues yet lightens the tone with clever banter. We are very fortunate with our great cast, and their fantastic on-screen chemistry – I think this series will hold its own in these competitive times and play to a broad audience looking for uncompromising entertainment. It is set against a backdrop of international espionage and corporate sabotage in the privately-funded space race: billionaires use their wealth to deploy private military units to achieve their political and business goals.

How did the shooting locations contribute to the overall concept and tone of the "Professionals"?

The series was shot at some amazing and rarely photographed locations in South Africa. The landscape offers the audience an incomparable look and brings the blue-

sky aspect of this show to life. A diverse team of artists and technicians was assembled before and behind the camera and their dedication and passion shows in every episode.

"The Name of the Rose" represents an ambitious period drama, tell us why this series is still modern today.

Although the story takes place in medieval time it explores modern and relevant themes, e.g. fundamentalism, wealth and power, religion being utilized, misery caused by war, the way obscurantism denies freedom and liberty of knowledge and the subversive power of laughter. Being punished for the crime of satire is still happening today.



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Invisible Target Episodes 16x50' **Genre** Drama, criminal **Synopsis** A genius with a photographic memory escapes his mafia bosses and starts a new life as an insurance salesman.



Reluctant Hero Episodes 10x48' **Genre** Reluctant Hero **Synopsis** A loser is diagnosed with inoperable tumor that shrinks when he commits heroic, selfless acts. Now he helps the police with the most dangerous cases.



Shadow Behind Episodes 12x48' **Genre** Crime, drama **Synopsis** It takes 10 years for a seasoned detective to capture the elusive serial killer in a small town.

Hot Properties Q&A: Timur Weinstein, General Producer

What does an ambitious show such as Invisible Target tell us about the growth of Russian drama domestically and how is this feeding into its popularity further afield?

The most important point to make about the evolution of the Russian drama domestically is the depth of characters. It's becoming more and more realistic and relatable, top series such as Invisible Target portray a complete transformation of the protagonist from one way of thinking and behaving, into another, that propels him to be a different, better person who can solve the mounting problems thrown at him.

Reluctant Hero combines elements of drama and comedy, how popular is this genre in Russia and what makes the show suitable for other countries?

The genre mix and match has proven to be one of the most successful tactics in bringing in new audiences and scoring high popularity online. Viewers are tired of dark criminal dramas and want a different experience, which is exactly what Reluctant

Hero offers. This type of dark, edgy humor is very popular in France and England, where sarcasm and quirky jokes are part of a cultural archetype, and it's growing its footprint in Russia as well.

Tell us a little about where you shot Shadow Behind and how the choice of locations has added to the show's overall feel.

The location was supposed to bring the eerie feeling seeped into the plot to a totally new level. We wanted to create an atmosphere where each episode, each murder would add to the dark inevitability, with which shadow always follows its master. ... To enhance this ambience, we used a visual confrontation and chose a location where prosecutor's office and local police department were situated opposite one another, acting like each other's shadows. The location in 'Shadow Behind' tells just as powerful story as the overall plot.

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Stacey Dooley Meets the IS Brides
Episodes 1x45' **Genre** Current Affairs
Synopsis Stacey confronts the contentious issue of how the West should respond to the dilemma facing Western society: what do we do with the IS brides?



Paul O'Grady's Little Heroes **Episodes** 12x30' **Genre** Human Interest
Synopsis This life-affirming and uplifting series is a celebration of the little heroes who come through the hospital doors of the iconic Great Ormond Street Hospital.



The Trouble with Crossrail **Episodes** 1x60' **Genre** Science
Synopsis With unrivalled access, we see how Europe's biggest engineering project is being stalled by everything from discovery of ancient burial grounds to serious fires and endless engineering problems.

Hot Properties Q&A: Lynn Lugsden, Head of Formats

How does Stacey Dooley's latest investigation further her previous work in the field?

Stacey is no stranger to bringing focus to contentious issues, however this time she's exploring answers to questions that have been a major topic of global debate. Gaining life risking access to a Syrian camp she attempts to present a balanced view to a subject that divides opinion. Yet in the face of such risk she still maintains her trademark natural style, demonstrating human and relatable responses that makes her compelling viewing.

What type of slot does Paul O'Grady's Little Heroes work best in and why?

The high level of emotion and hard hitting reality that accompanies the subject matter of children facing complex medical issues usually places such a series in a later slot. However using a host with a gift of being able to deploy appropriate humour and sensitivity in the face of stark reality to tell the stories of the brave youngsters,

enables the sad and heart-breaking to be balanced with light and humour, providing a heart-warming inspiring tone which would enable this series to work across a multitude of slots such as Daytime, Access Primetime and Primetime.

What is the most compelling takeaway from The Trouble With Crossrail?

This is a whistle blowing documentary that doesn't just pin the delays on the complex nature of the project, but highlights inadequacies at many levels and exposes the broken promises of the benefits Crossrail would offer. Yet at the highest levels those inadequacies have been rewarded.



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RuPaul's Drag Race UK **Episodes** 8x60'
Genre Entertainment **Synopsis** RuPaul has made the trip across the pond in search for a queen with the most charisma, uniqueness, nerve and talent in all the land.



Twice The Life For Half The Price
Episodes 6x60' **Genre** Lifestyle & Format
Synopsis Presenter Kate Humble joins families who are looking to change their lives in a big way.



Bridging The Expanse **Episodes** 6x60'
Genre Documentary series **Synopsis** Series which celebrates the world's most iconic bridges, exploring the remarkable feats of engineering from early history through to the present day.

Hot Properties Q&A: Emmanuelle Namiech, CEO

How will the UK edition of RuPaul's Drag Race be different from the US format?

The main difference come from the local flavour injected by the contestants themselves who embody the British wit and sense of humour. The series features a broad spectrum of queens. Contestants are not just from the London scene, but come from across the country including Yorkshire, Liverpool, Birmingham and Belfast. As a result, the UK show reflects the Brit identity and double-entendres and verbal idiosyncrasies play a great part in reflecting the end-of-the-pier brashness from UK Drag Queens.

How does Twice The Life For Half The Price further the 'escape to the country' format?

People taking part in this aspirational series will benefit from advice and support from its presenter, Kate Humble, a passionate advocate of rural living who has made the move herself. Kate will be with our families as they spend their first night in their new

home, have their first day at their new school, new job etc. So the series goes beyond the actual property search with Kate helping families to overcome the challenges of settling into a new life and reflect on whether they've achieved the goal to escape the rat race.

How does Bridging The Expanse go about telling the history of these bridges?

Many bridges have outlived the civilisations that created them while others remain sublime, imaginative visions for the future. This series takes us both around the world and throughout history with both iconic and lesser known structures featured. The series is chronological, with each one-hour episode focusing on a particular stage in the evolution of bridges - the materials they are made from, and the technologies that enabled their construction. The general approach, therefore, is linear - but on occasion will leap vertically as well, providing opportunities to compare contemporary structures with those firmly anchored in the past.

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Contacts: David Bogi
Head of International Distribution & Business Development



Commissario Ricciardi Episodes 6x100' **Genre** Crime-Detective **Synopsis** The TV series currently in production in Naples is taken from the highly successful novels by Maurizio de Giovanni, translated and sold all over the world.



Piaggio Episodes 1x100' **Genre** Bio-pic, Movie **Synopsis** The story of the entrepreneur who made the scooter Vespa famous by making it an integral part of the Italian culture and imagination.



Meraviglie 2 Episodes 12x52' **Genre** Travel **Synopsis** The show takes the viewer on a tour of Italy, its works, places and absolutely unique ways of life in a testament to the creativity and ingenuity of our antecedents.

Hot Properties Q&A: David Bogi - Head of International Distribution & Business Development

How closely does the adaptation of Commissario Ricciardi reflect the novels?

This stunning 1930s historical adaptation of the streets of Naples, from Maurizio de Giovanni's successful novels, are full of bloody crimes where the young detective Ricciardi cannot bear leaving an unsolved case. Ricciardi has a natural gift -or curse- that persecutes him as he can see the ghosts of murdered people and hear their last thoughts. The stories are a powerful mix of genres - police, mystery and supernatural - for a strong and engaging narration that investigates the ultimate meaning of life.

Piaggio explores the history of the iconic Italian scooter brand Vespa; how did this show come about?

It was about time that the incredible story of the iconic brand was brought to the public. The family business was created by Enrico Piaggio and goes as far back as 1882, yet little is known of the down side of the Piaggio history when close to bankruptcy Enrico Piaggio and friend Corradino d'Ascanio managed to change

its destiny through revolutionary methods: an advertisement based on female communication and pro rata payment system. This scooter became part of the Italian representation abroad and it is still famous worldwide, testified by the 18 million units sold around the globe.

Tell us about some of the destinations explored in Meraviglie 2 and why the show engages with both Italian and international viewers.

The shows take the viewer on a tour of Italy, its works, places and absolutely unique ways of life in a testament to the creativity and ingenuity of our antecedents. These are places recognized as World Heritage Sites by UNESCO to not forget that Italy has more UNESCO sites than any other country in the world. Italy is gifted with these vestiges that have survived various historical periods, from the Neolithic and Classical antiquity to the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Baroque period and the Age of Enlightenment.



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Motorbike Cops Episodes 2 series 17x30' **Genre** Reality & Entertainment **Synopsis** This elite group of highly trained officers are working the busy roads and expressways in Sydney on motorbikes, keeping the streets safe.



Towies Episodes 2 series 20x30' **Genre** Reality & Entertainment **Synopsis** The highway to Queensland's Coast is Australia's deadliest, and when things go wrong one of the country's largest towing companies is there to pick up the pieces.



Murder, Lies and Alibis Episodes 5x60' **Genre** Crime & Investigation **Synopsis** Series exploring true crimes that are powerfully etched into the Australian public's psyche - told by surviving the victims, eyewitnesses, investigators and perpetrators.

Hot Properties Q&A: Jimmy Humphrey, Head of Acquisitions & Co-Productions

Australian unscripted content seems to be growing in popularity worldwide, what is driving this shift?

We've long been supporters of the production community in Australia, both with the indies & the growing in-house production teams within the networks. Production values are high, stories aren't too domestically-focused, and viewers are given access into worlds and environments which many never will never experience first hand.

What is it that makes a series about traffic cops working in Sydney of interest to international viewers?

The combination of the scorched red earth and the endless blue sky adds an element of glamour to an otherwise very crowded, and often quite bleak marketplace for flashing blue light shows. What's more, these cops aren't afraid to tell it like it is which makes for exciting and often amusing viewing. We think this series will skew a bit younger and likely quite male, a demo often sought after with buyers of course.

Demand for true crime programming shows no signs of abating, what makes Murder, Lies and Alibis stand out from other shows on the market?

There are 3 amazing stories in this brand, each with their own unique spin on the genre. Rather than rely on hammy drama recon, Nine's in-house production team have combined actual phone calls, compelling archive and stylized re-enactment to tell the three unique stories, which wouldn't feel out of place on global streamers, and linear broadcasters alike.

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Last Word Sara Curran

Why the pulling of Endeavor's IPO is inconsistent with the growing value of talent

“Increasingly, scripted and non-scripted producers find themselves sitting in the reception areas of Netflix and Amazon opposite A-list Hollywood stars and personalities, waiting to pitch their own projects to buyers but risking being cut out of the loop altogether as the streamers and studios sign the talent directly.”

Sara Curran is founder & CEO of Tricycle Talent. She previously co-founded Kew Media Group and before that was an MD at YMU

There's a lot of chatter about why celebrated agency Endeavor pulled its IPO. Was it a result of timing and bearish market conditions? Is it a sign that Wall Street's appetite for investing in talent agencies is lower than expected? Was it swept up with the failed or soft IPOs of WeWork, Uber, Lyft and Peloton and nothing to do with its core business?

Or is Endeavor just fighting too many battles with the likes of UFC fighters and the Writers Guild of America (WGA)? The battle with the latter regarding packaging fees certainly does not look any closer to being resolved. When Endeavor, which is behind WME, announced its intention to go public, the WGA stated that it was “impossible to reconcile the fundamental purpose of an agency... with the business of maximising returns for Wall Street”.

Whatever the reasons for putting the IPO on hold, there is no doubt that talent is king. Every day we read about multimillion dollar exclusive deals with spectacular talent. Hot on the heels of her well-deserved success at the Emmy's, Phoebe Waller-Bridge – who was behind *Killing Eve*, a show that Endeavor has a stake in – signed an exclusive deal with Amazon. The streamer currently delivers *Fleabag* in more than 200 countries including the US and the photo of Waller-Bridge reclining in a chair after the awards holding a martini and a cigarette went viral.

With the growing power of talent, big management companies are polarising into two pools. There are a few large corporate entities backed by private equity funds: CAA (TPG), WME (Silver Lake), UTA (PSP), YMU (Trilantic), ITG (Yucaipa). And then there are the UK and US agencies that have eschewed private equity and are closely held by the companies' senior agents: UTA, ICM, United Agents and Casarotto. ICM sold to private equity in 2005 and then reversed that process in 2012. During the ICM buyback, the troops were memorably rallied with the words “no one in the history of the world ever washed a rental car”.

At the other end of the spectrum, there are numerous small agencies run by two or three agents or managers that offer a very personal and nimble hands-on service to their clients. Many were formed by agents leaving the large corporates to get some equity and a seat at the table. Some then become trapped by their small size until they sell out to one of the bigger agencies. In recent years, Troika has merged into YMU and Tavistock Wood into Original Talent.

This polarisation has created an opportunity for Tricycle Talent, which we launched earlier this year. Tricycle Talent provides talent management boutiques with working capital, strategic counsel and access to a wider network, so that they can offer a 360-degree management solution with a personal touch, without losing control of their business. Interestingly, the Tricycle proposition seems to resonate strongly with women, where there has traditionally been a reward discrepancy with their white male counterparts. The first three boutiques in the collective are all female-led and the next three are a diverse mix.

In 2019, it seems there is room for both models: some clients will gravitate towards the ever more diversified three-lettered agencies, while others prefer to have a more bespoke and intimate relationship with their agents. And some do both: for example, Waller-Bridge continues to retain her original talent agent, Aileen McEwan, and is also repped by ITG and UTA. Ultimately, it's about delivering value.

Whatever the ownership structure of the agencies, the power lies with the talent they represent. Increasingly, scripted and non-scripted producers find themselves sitting in the reception areas of Netflix and Amazon opposite A-list Hollywood stars and personalities, waiting to pitch their own projects to buyers but risking being cut out of the loop altogether as the streamers and studios sign the talent directly. Whatever the ownership of their agencies, talent is king. **TBI**

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