

Director-General's Report

Michael McEwen, NABA



Here it is already mid-October and we're well into the fall season, which for broadcasters means assessing the new on-air-schedule performances,

NHL Hockey starting, and the World Series is just a League Championship away. Go Jays!

For NABA though it is more than just the content and schedules, it's what goes on behind them in broadcast operations and new technology. It's been a busy year so far and it looks to stay that way for a while. As you'll note in this *NABAcaster*, we continue our work in Cyber Security with a joint release of broadcaster requirements for equipment suppliers. We did that together with our UK partners, the Digital Production Partnership (DPP), in Amsterdam at the IBC (as mentioned in our cover story). Although this is just a beginning, our industry is becoming increasingly aware of the risks and the need to address them.

To that end, we are planning a Cyber Security Symposium in New York City on December 1st hosted by NBCUniversal at 30 Rockefeller Plaza. You can find a registration link on Page 5 of this *NABAcaster*.

Media over IP (MoIP)

Cyber Security becomes even more of an issue as we all move to IP-based production and distribution facilities. MoIP has been the focus of a Working Group of our Technical Committee. Chaired by NBCU's Thomas Bause Mason, the group began its work late last year with a focus on education and current practices and, in recent months, a survey was taken of our broadcast members on their MoIP requirements.

The results are now being collated and will be presented to the Technical Committee on November 30th in New York and then shared with the Joint Task Force

on Network Media (the JT-NM members include SMPTE, the European Broadcasting Union, and the Video Services Forum). It is our hope that our input to the JT-NM will inform the discussion and lead to common specifications, standards and practices; easing the way forward to building and making operational IP-broadcast production and operations plants.

File Formats

Clyde Smith (Fox) continues to lead our efforts on defining the specifications for common metadata in file-format workflows. Readers will recall that we are building a North American solution based on the work of the DPP in the UK. It is a process we began about a year and a half ago and we are in the final months of completing the work. Specifications for Air-Ready Masters have already been completed for legacy systems utilizing MPEG 2 and 4, and testing is in progress on creating the "Golden Files." Library masters for HD and UHD are progressing to completion. We are working to have these specifications supported by SMPTE.

Of course, the goal is to simplify our workflow, create a better understanding by a common specification, and reduce expenses, errors and confusion. Some have noted that in an IP-based production plant, file formats will not be an issue. Perhaps that is true, but many broadcast organizations will continue to use file-based applications, specifications and rules for many years, and the need to support these systems in the most efficient and effective way possible remains.

As the specification and standards work winds up, the implementation phase begins with the most important step being "education." This effort is being led by Bob Zitter (formerly CTO and EVP at HBO) and will focus on three crucial stakeholders: broadcasters, equipment manufacturers, and the production community. Educational papers that focus on the technical requirements, the business case, and the production challenges are all in the process of being prepared. Beginning in early 2017, seminars in Los Angeles, Atlanta, New York and Toronto

will bring the message home to our industry. Broadcaster implementation will begin late this year and probably span the next couple of years as broadcasters update their equipment as part of their normal capital plan.

It is very exciting to see all of this come together, knowing that this work is being done by broadcasters for broadcasters and is based on the "user experience."

FM Chips in Smartphones

The Radio Committee's Working Group on FM Chips in Smartphones is chaired by David Layer from the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), and they have been developing strategies to encourage all North American mobile carriers to enable the already-embedded FM chip in smartphones. The Working Group is also encouraging handset manufacturers who have not yet embedded FM chips in their devices to do so as soon as possible.

From NABA's perspective, these dual initiatives make perfect sense, both as a public service (as in times of emergency) and as a business opportunity, which an activated chip, alongside an app like NextRadio, provides for both the carrier and the broadcaster. Additionally, this makes smartphones even more indispensable to the consumer. It's like a modern day Walkman on steroids with millions of chip-enabled phones becoming portable radios, but with all the added features of the digital age.

In the process of this work the NAB has undertaken market research in the US on the penetration of chip-enabled smartphones. The opportunity for NABA to partner with the NAB to get a better picture of the North American marketplace, by obtaining FM chip data from both Canada and Mexico, was just too good to pass up. We released our first results last month, which can be reviewed on our website [here](#) (and also on Page 5 of this issue). The short summary of these results is that FM-chip-enabled smartphone penetration in the US and Canada is good, and in Mexico it is very good. This is an initiative that makes so much sense for all the stakeholders that we find it

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troubling that some mobile telephone manufacturers and carriers resist the idea.

NABA has also just sent a submission to the International Telecommunication Union Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R) asking Study Group 6 (Broadcasting Service) to give a new opinion concerning the activation of radio receivers in smartphones in the context of a recent ITU Report on disaster coverage and emergency broadcasting. The Radio Committee Vice-Chair (Paul Brenner from Emmis Communications) will present the submission in Geneva the week of October 23rd.

A lot of very good work is being done to move this file forward and I thank the working group and the Radio Committee for their leadership.

Other Projects on the Stove

Without creating a long list, it is important for readers to know that we remain deeply involved in all the issues and initiatives associated with the Next Generation of Television. ATSC 3.0 will soon be a finished standard and implementation will begin - the sharing of implementation strategies and experiences will become increasingly important. Issues like High Dynamic Range and Color Gamut become important features to all the industry stakeholders, and to the consumers and markets that they hope will quickly adopt these technologies. The full range of these new technologies and the challenges and opportunities they raise are active parts of every discussion with our TC and Board.

NABA's 2017 AGM and the 3rd Future of Radio & Audio Symposium

We are also looking ahead to February, when we will hold our Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Washington. PBS is hosting our AGM on February 15th and the next day (February 16th) the NAB will hold the third *Future of Radio & Audio Symposium* (FRAS). On the 14th of February, we will hold our Committee and Board of Directors meetings at members' Washington offices. With all the challenges and opportunities of the Next Generation of Television looking to become less a technology-developing story and more about implementation strategies, Washington seemed like a good spot for the AGM. Canada and Mexico have both hosted a FRAS, so Washington and the NAB is a great fit. My thanks to the NAB and PBS for the generous support they are giving NABA by hosting these gatherings.

Changes at the NABA-RACC

After almost three years of leading this committee, Michael Miller (ABC) is stepping down from his role as Chair. He took over the committee when Bob Ross became NABA President in 2014. A lot has happened on Michael's watch, notably the Cyber Security Working Group and the development of broadcaster requirements for vendors, the development of our Cyber Security Symposium (in partnership with TC Chair John Lee), and the creation of a number of SubTeams in the committee, which focus on a variety of different safety and security issues. Michael has a new job within the Disney organization and unfortunately needs to leave RACC. I know you will all join me in thanking him for his service and leadership. We wish you well Michael.

Thankfully RACC has had a very active Vice-Chair in John Moore (VP, Health & Safety, Fox). John has volunteered to take on the Chair's job and will have a face-to-face meeting with his committee November 30th in New York. RACC will then have the opportunity to review its mandate and create a work plan for the year ahead. My thanks to John for doing this and we all look forward to his leadership.

The WBU Conference

On the final week of this month, at the end of the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union's (ABU) General Assembly in Indonesia, the ABU will host the WBU for a one-day conference. There has not been a WBU Conference in more than twenty years, principally because the NAB Show and IBC provided both content and venues at their yearly conferences and exhibitions.

However, some of my counterparts from the WBU felt that there was a need for the WBU to come together for a day to look at the current issues in a global context. NABA is contributing expertise to a few panels; WBU-TC Chair Bob Plummer from Fox will be part of a technology panel, the CBC Ombudsman Esther Enkin will represent us on both the Climate Change and Disaster Prevention and the evolving responsibilities of Public Service Media in the Digital Era panels. Finally, I will Chair the Climate Change and Disaster panel and open the conference as Head of the WBU.

So, as I observed at the start of this report, it has been a busy year and for sure it's going to continue that way as the year comes to a close. ■

WBU Conference Details and Program Finalized

Only a little more than a week remains until the gathering in Bali for the World Broadcasting Unions' Conference. Everything is finalized by the hosts ABU and RRI and it is set to be a very worthwhile event for those able to attend.

If you have not yet registered for the WBU Conference, please do so promptly at:

<http://www.abu.org.my/Event--GA2016.aspx>

Of particular interest to NABA members are the following panelists/speakers:

- Michael McEwen, Director-General, NABA | Head, WBU Secretariat
- Esther Enkin, Ombudsman, English Services, CBC/Radio-Canada
- Robert H. Plummer, Vice-Chair, Technical Committee, NABA

The full program is available at [WBU Conference Program](#).

