

M+E

JOURNAL

WHAT'S NEXT?

An M&E industry that's learned to adapt and excel after a year like no other, for one

LOCALIZATION

Dubbing from home is a work in progress

SECURITY

How to beat piracy and secure your business during a pandemic

SMART CONTENT

The new ways content players are using data to connect with consumers

NEW WORKFLOWS

Adopting the latest tools fuels a successful change to remote work

20.02

HOW EUROPEAN M&E CAN OVERCOME ADVERSITY THROUGH COLLABORATION

By Caroline Baines, Member Services Director - Europe, MESA

The media and entertainment industry in Europe continues to face a host of challenges due to the pandemic, with productions halted for months, the logistics of moving thousands of staff to working from home, theatrical releases put on hold (or released via new platforms), and the need to implement business continuity plans at breakneck speed.

As productions re-start and employees adjust to working at home, what lies ahead, and how has the MESA Europe community responded to date?

At the start the year it was unfathomable to imagine that the vast majority of people working within the M&E space would be required to work from home. And when the office doors closed everyone started the process of testing how robust their technology actually was, and home working best practice and guidelines became top priority. For most organizations home working was already a standard practice, albeit for maybe one or two days a week, however being office based was deemed necessary for many roles. This requirement was turned on its head as companies across the M&E supply chain had to adapt, and contingency plans which most thought would never be needed had to be implemented in record time.

The industry has proven remarkably resilient and although a number of projects were halted, work has continued and for many companies operating remotely has resulted in business as usual. As lockdown hit, consumer demand for content rocketed, with streaming services seeing solid growth in many European markets. We are now seeing increased appetite for new content, as heightened consumption has meant consumers have watched much of the existing catalog. This will be the challenge over the next few months, to keep the

viewer engaged and continue to offer new and compelling content. This has resulted in an increase in demand for international content, which under different circumstances may not have been viewed in certain countries.

As the industry looks ahead, the MESA community in Europe has continued to pull together. We've seen many collaborations between our members and a variety of interesting partnerships have developed this year. These have cut across localization, security, data and the digital supply chain. One of MESA's key missions is to foster end-to-end collaboration among entertainment service providers, their customers, and partners and we will continue to offer opportunities for these vital discussions to take place.

One of the strengths of MESA here in Europe has been our special interest groups and these are continuing, although chatting with a coffee and croissant has been replaced by virtual meetings. There are three main groups which meet on a regular basis:

■ **The Content Localisation Council** has the aim of raising the profile of localization and tackling key industry challenges. This highly engaged group is currently looking at a number of key initiatives, including the current and future role of AI and machine learning, how the industry recruits and retains talent for both dubbing and subtitling, and current consultations regarding access services for VOD. And, looking forward to a time when in-person events can take place, we hope to create a localization awards program, to enable the industry to come together to celebrate some of the amazing projects which are being undertaken.

Continued on page 142



Caroline joined MESA Europe as director of operations in 2018, following a 20-year career in research and consulting within the media, entertainment and technology sector. In her current role as director of member services, she oversees the European community, ensuring the special interest groups work together to address key industry challenges and raising the profile of members via MESA's events. In addition, she is committed to expanding the European membership base and to continuing to provide a platform for shared learning, networking and collaboration. caroline.baines@MESAonline.org @MESAlliance

■ **The MESA Europe Security group** continues to face many challenges, with the pandemic and resulting lockdown leading to greater security risks, this for an industry which already encounters a never-ending onslaught from those who seek to profit by stealing content. Remote working, app and cloud security and the growing problem of illegal hosting and streaming for sports, films and TV content are regularly debated. Through knowledge sharing, interaction with other security-focused groups and informed debate, this group aims to continue to provide a highly valued forum for vendors and content owners to come together.

■ **The MESA Data & Analytics group** is addressing a number of topics, from AI and machine learning, workflow efficiencies, the role of metadata in discoverability and personalization and how the value of assets can be appropriately gauged, managed and monetized. The challenges of managing internal data, legacy systems and the plethora of different formats remain central to many of the discussions taking place within this group.

The European M&E industry has many hurdles to overcome in the next 12 months, with uncertainty around the pandemic taking center stage. However, the tenacity, creativity and endurance shown in the last six months has demonstrated the extraordinary pace with which technology change can take place. This coupled with the consumer's ongoing love affair and hunger for content will ensure the industry comes back stronger than ever. ■