

**M+E**

**JOURNAL**

# It's Showtime!

Innovation explodes across every workflow as technology emerges from the pandemic.



Where are you in this accelerated evolution?

## **DIVERSITY & INCLUSION**

In the office, behind the camera, and on the screen, diversity is crucial

## **SECURITY**

Remote productions create new security concerns, with assets under siege

## **SMART CONTENT**

Artificial intelligence and machine learning are being applied in new, exciting ways

## **NEW WORKFLOWS**

The cloud is delivering on its promise, powering the future of productions

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# NEW CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS CAN LEAD TO POST-PRODUCTION COMPLEXITIES



**ABSTRACT:** While OTT cost is still a factor with consumers, it's no longer the most significant reason they stick around. When asked what drives their loyalty, our research found almost half of consumers said the amount of content, followed by the quality of content (43 percent) and pricing (24 percent). When asked why consumers canceled a service, lack of exciting content was the main reason (38 percent). With roughly the top eight global content producers slated to spend more than \$100 billion on content creation, an accelerated production path to revenue conversion will remain in focus. Here's what content providers can do to keep up with demand.

By Darby Walker, VP, Media,  
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Division of Vubiquity

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the media and entertainment industry in different ways. For one, our research found that more than a third (34 percent) of consumers added a new video streaming service to their viewing catalog. On the other hand, Los Angeles filming hit record lows, with fourth-quarter production down almost 25 percent.

Fortunately, with vaccines being administered and the markets indicating a more bullish 2021, the narrative will likely shift towards the positive. However, consumer expectations have changed during the pandemic, and that brings some new considerations to the table.

**THE REASSURING NEWS** for these consumers is that the production pipeline looks healthy. Billions will continue to be spent on new content in 2021. Studios, streamers and production companies are expected to get back to a regular production cadence upon clearing COVID-19 concerns and fully regaining their capacity.

### CONSUMERS WANT A STEADY STREAM OF CONTENT EVEN MORE THAN A LOW PRICE

While cost is still a factor with consumers, it's no longer the most significant reason they stay with their streaming providers. When asked what drives their loyalty, our research found that almost half of consumers said the amount of content (49 percent), followed by the quality of the content (45 percent) and pricing (38 percent).

The reassuring news for these consumers is that the production pipeline looks healthy. Billions will continue to be spent on new content in 2021. Studios, streamers and production companies are expected to get back to a regular production cadence upon clearing COVID-19 concerns and fully regaining their capacity.

### CHANGES TO THE POST-PRODUCTION CYCLE

While post-production from major studios did slow over the past year, the pandemic brought increased output in other areas. Reality TV was a significant television driver in last year's Q4, with an estimated increase of 93 percent compared to the previous year. We also saw the rise of "pandemic-friendly" programming, with the likes of "Selena + Chef" on HBO Max making an impact, and the restoration of older films and TV shows as they find a second life on streaming.

As the traditional speed of content comes back, we don't expect these new areas to go away, putting more pressure on the post-production process to get everything out promptly. Remote work and increased collaboration across production studios, which were tested during the pandemic, will become necessary to ensure a timely turnaround.

Beyond this, expect artificial intelligence to be used in support, not as a replacement, to the human touch moving forward. For example, listening to a sentence and filling a gap without an actor coming to the studio

to re-record, saving time and money. AI can also better capture metadata through an automated process, better noting when content was created or updated.

### A REVISED LOOK AT GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION STRATEGIES

Due to the pandemic, licensing and availability rights have changed in such a way that consumers now expect content to be available immediately – regardless of location or language.

The challenge is getting a piece of content that is culturally acceptable, meeting standards and censorship practices of specific markets, and is localized in a robust and high-quality manner. Equally important is ensuring that the content is relevant to the individual, meaning that providers balance several sets of expectations.

Just as AI recommendations are being used to get the right content in front of the right people on streaming services, it can also determine what unique stories, release schedules, and advertising connect most with consumers. Expect this to become an increasingly important part of the post-production process.

Taking these considerations into account, coupled with new consumer expectations, could demonstrate what these critical final steps look like in the future. ■



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