



SXSW 2015 Travel Report

Market dates: 13 March - 21 March 2015

Report by: Cieron Cody, VP, Screen
Queensland



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Purpose of Travel:

- Engage with major stakeholders in the screen sector to raise awareness of the viability of partnering with Queensland.
- Establish commercial relationships that can be leveraged in service to the local industry.
- Attain and implement vital current market and industrial contacts and intelligence to best understand the needs of the local industry and focus current efforts to address these needs.

Trending Topics were vast and many of which have roots at previous SXSW conferences. Amongst them were; robotics, Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, maximising content for less, immersive technology, the rise (and need) in marginalised voices in industry, 3D printing in Hollywood, hyper reality TV and online media, increasing culture of instant gratification in media, breaking the fourth wall with new technologies, the future of cinema, multiple format potential in projects, the state of online finance, building audiences online, rise of the female show runner, wearable tech, the takeover of online platforms (YouTube, Netflix, Hulu, Vudu, Vimeo, BuzzFeed, Yahoo, Amazon), social innovation, the state of the innovation economy, sustaining relevance in a state of constant digital change, UX (user experience), online authenticity and community building, data mining and analytics supporting iterative narrative process online.

SXSW:

SXSW can be appreciated for its world-class position in presenting current intelligence throughout the areas of interactive, film and music. Its point of difference lies in its multi-disciplinary breadth and attention to sector overlap and because of this, convergent thinking sets about a primary framework. It serves up unique conditions for industrial and market intelligence exchange across traditional business practice to disruptive methodology and philosophy.

SXSW offers a strong foundation for networking with leading thinkers, decision makers, and creatives. I found that sales agents and distributors spent more time at screenings and casual networking and this provided more breathing room for networking than what you might expect at sprint paced events like AFM.

The innovative tone of SXSW gives a sense that you're at the industrial helm with an overview of new frontiers in screen practice. I noticed that a high number of filmmakers in competition were also recent Sundance nominees/winners. The program lends itself to distinct voices, disruptive points of view and subject matter either challenging, cutting-edge or comedic. Combined, these elements make for fertile ground for market players eager catch talent early.

Furthermore it's now commonly accepted by major broadcasters and other market players that remaining current requires active pursuit of knowledge and there's a rising fear that by not keeping abreast of new-thinking one will fall behind. It's interesting to gauge the sense of vulnerability felt by the market. What this means for business is that the market is open, curious and willing to understand commercial potential from untested places. I observed that whilst the market expressed fierce curiosity they were still at times disoriented by the noise which only further emphasises the need for innovative projects to articulate their value in succinct, sophisticated ways that express market sensitivity.