

MIPCOM Market Report

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Trends:

MIPCOM 2016 was a buoyant market, attended by 14,000 delegates of which 4,900 were buyers (both up on last year) and, of those, 1,500 working for digital and SVOD services – a reflection of their growth and increasing audience share.

The market and its attending conference signalled industry focus in 2016-17 will remain on the crossover between digital and traditional media. Its emphasis was on high-end original drama and premium factual with global audiences, while the opportunities presented by technology - 4K and HDR, in particular - and new platforms, notably Virtual Reality (VR).

Buyers of all content continued to stress the need for content to appeal to multiple markets, and while there is interest in variety provided by specific and unique stories and locations, including Australia, content-makers were challenged to ensure universality was embedded into their approach to storytelling if they were to successfully unlock finance and access to audience.

Competition for audience between digital and traditional broadcast media was no more obvious than in YouTube's accelerated shift to original content focus with more YouTube Red commissions announced, many of them tapping into YouTube's home-grown stars - like Dan Avidan and Arin Hanson from the Game Grumps channel who will star in a scripted comedy series to be produced by Starburns Industries, on-screen talent with significant YouTube following - like Dwayne Johnson who is to EP a half-hour action series, or established talent - like Lost writer Jeff Lieber who will script a new sci-fi drama.

Pay TV and SVOD increased presence and profile in the high-end drama space (even as some experts raised questions as to the sustainability of competition, quality and rising budgets for drama). Among the dramas launched at MIPCOM premiere screenings were: Mata Hari (Red Arrow International), The Halcyon (Sony Pictures Television), The Same Sky (Beta Film), The Rocky Horror Picture Show: Let's do the Time Warp Again (20th Century Fox Television Distribution), The Catch Season 2 (Disney Media Distribution), with on-screen talent promoting shows including Designated Survivor, UnREAL, Conviction, Fortitude and the new Twin Peaks.

Broadcast factual also noted a shift in the way audiences were watching documentary, and the influence of the 'golden age' of drama/new platforms on factual production, financing, commissioning and acquisition. Locally-relevant content that had the ability to speak to global audiences and high-end, star-led treatments of natural history, science and history were attracting attention.

VR (with experts dismissing the idea that it risked becoming the 21st century echo of 3D) seemed here to stay, and immersive storytelling was developing as a format - especially as a tool for factual producers. Market confidence was demonstrated by the launch of dedicated VR apps launched by Sky (UK pay tv operator) and Discovery.

Children's content was also experiencing a lift, with record screenings at MIPJunior. Keynote Deirdre Brennan, VP Content at Corus Kids, Canada (and until recently ABC TV's Head of Children's) spoke of the opportunities in children's television, and the challenge to kids content makers to rise to the needs of audience. "Kids are creative, resilient and fearless. Why should they expect anything less from us?" she said.

Queensland at MIPCOM:

A delegation of Queensland producers attended MIPCOM 2016. They included: Aaron Fa'aoso (Lonestar Company), Daley Pearson and Charlie Aspinwall (Ludo Studio), Meredith Garlick (Thomas Street Productions), Nadine Bates, Kristen Souvlis and Ryan Greaves (Like A Photon Creative), Nathan Mayfield and Tracey Robertson (Hoodlum), Peter Johnston (Fade In Productions) and Veronica Fury (Wildbear Entertainment).

Jo Dillon - EVP, Development & Production - attended on behalf of Screen Queensland. She met with representatives of companies including: All3Media, Australian Children's Television Foundation, Blue Ant Media, CAA, Cake, DHX Media, Discovery, FremantleMedia International, History, National Geographic, NBC Universal, Netflix, NHK World TV, PACT (UK Producers) Red Arrow, Screen Australia, Sky Vision, Sonar Entertainment, SPADA (New Zealand producers), TVF International, YouTube, Vice, WME and ZDF Enterprises as well as a number of independent international production companies seeking coproduction opportunities with Australia.

To discuss your projects in this context, please contact Jo through Liz Meehan at Screen Queensland: lmeehan@screenqld.com.au