

# VIDEO AGE

MOVIE

i n t e r n a t i o n a l

In This Issue:  
**Italy's Best**  
**LAM Power**  
**Eli Wallach**  
**Simply Complex**

www.videoage.org

## Kids' Properties Move Onto The Big Screen Big Time

BY BOB JENKINS

It used to be the case that taking a kids' TV series and transferring it to the big screen was a relatively rare phenomenon. But it is becoming much more common every year.

When it comes to adapting kids' TV series for cinema, few companies are more active right now than Germany's Studio 100, which is currently producing two such projects, *Maya The Bee* with Flying Bark Productions of Australia, part of the Studio 100 Group; and *House of Anubis* with Nickelodeon Germany. Plus, it has three more in development: *Woodlives*, *Blinky Bill* and *Heidi and the Viking King*. The company has also recently made movies off the

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Horrid Henry is now a film star

## Buying Movies Is An Art Based On Figures

MIPCOM-AFM competition is "filmsy"

So, what are the film genres that will be most popular with buyers at AFM? Naturally, talking with distributors, the best movies are those that they're distributing at the Santa Monica market, which

and Television Association, 19 of those companies were found under IFTA's AFM Umbrella Stand, representing one more than last year. A similar crossover exists with buyers, but, according to

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is taking place November 2-9. The date itself has been criticized for falling just after MIPCOM and at the end of the buyers' budget availabilities.

In fact, there's a bit of overlap between MIPCOM and AFM: Out of the 334 distribution companies that exhibit at the AFM, 113 (or close to 34 percent) were also at MIPCOM. According to the Independent Film

## The UV Cloud Is Following Your Content Consumers

BY SARA ALESSI

A consortium of Hollywood studios, technology providers (like Toshiba), entertainment retailers (such as Best Buy) consumer device makers (e.g. Samsung Electronics) and video service providers (e.g. Netflix), called Digital Entertainment Content Ecosystem (DECE) have joined forces to offer UltraViolet, or UV (formerly known as Universal

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## The NATPE-Bound Get Bountiful

Just because there are 82 days left before NATPE doesn't mean the market isn't on people's minds. In fact, NATPE has become a yearlong topic of conversation, and whoever introduces the subject during gatherings is assured full attention. NATPE's CEO Rick Feldman stated, "This January we will see the distribution community spread over all the buildings in the Fontainebleau's footprint. We cut the suites in the Tresor [Tower] by about half and are using more space in the other towers and in meeting rooms, which will be down the hall behind the show floor. Also, the Digital Theater will be removed from the show floor to allow more distributors to use the floor. We will also have a place for smaller companies to exhibit at a screening station á la [DISCOP] Budapest and we will have an added lounge for attendees to rest. We are already running ahead of projections and expect growth in both buyers and sellers in January '12."

When asked whether NATPE would offer discount packages to encourage exhibitors to attend DISCOP Budapest (now NATPE-Budapest), Feldman responded, "About 30 percent of our Budapest companies are also in Miami.

(Continued on Page 4)

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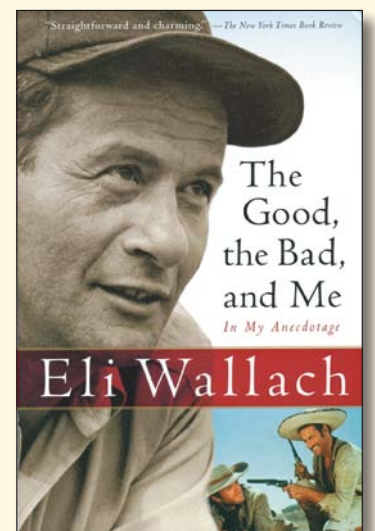


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## Kids' TV to Film

(Continued from Cover)

back of TV series such as *K3*, *Plop*, and *Pete the Pirate*. Managing director Patrick Elmendorff explained, "It is part of Studio 100's overall strategy to explore its own IP in as many business fields as possible, and "it is undeniable that a movie strengthens a brand enormously."

Mike Watts, joint MD of Novel Entertainment, who released a feature adaptation of *Horrid Henry* this summer, concurred: "A movie brings a ring of confidence to a brand and the potential for greater impact on the high street, especially in areas such as clothing, toiletries, games and toys." The film's opening took in just under £3 million (U.S.\$5 million), placing it at number four in the U.K., the only non-Hollywood movie in the top five.

Clearly this is not a process that would be considered unless the brand was already very well established, and for such brands, there are inherent dangers in being adapted into a movie.

As Elmendorff said of *Maya*, "the biggest risk is to disappoint the expectations of the audience and lifelong fans of *Maya The Bee*. Three generations have grown up with the character and now the challenge is to introduce the slightly revised character design needed for 3D." Although Elmendorff was confident that, "we will capture that charm, fun and joy of the classic *Maya* and give the visuals a fresh lick of 3D paint, with the result that the character will continue to live in the hearts of future generations."

HIT Entertainment is another company taking an iconic character from the small screen to the big screen, in their case with *Thomas The Tank Engine*. "Translating *Thomas and the Island of Sodor* into an all-new family movie franchise is certainly an ambitious undertaking with some risk attached," said Rick Glankler, SVP, Global Brand Management — Thomas & Friends, and Licensing — Thomas EMEA, HIT Entertainment. "We see the movie," explained Glankler, "as a re-imagining of the classic railway stories created by the Rev. Awdry, and that is really the only similarity between our established pre-school *Thomas & Friends* franchise and the theatrical movie."

Julia Pistor, a producer of HIT Movies at HIT Entertainment, added, "Moving beyond the pre-school demographic, the



The cast of Studio 100's House of Anubis

live action film will re-imagine *Thomas* to appeal to the entire family, while still remaining true to the characters, and rich storytelling tradition of Rev. Awdry." And, like Elmendorff, she too was confident that the process of re-imagining the characters will please aficionados, noting, "with a creative team that includes Shane Acker (Academy Award nominee for *9*), Weta Workshop and Mattel's entertainment design team working alongside the writing team of Chris Viscardi and Will Robb (*Alvin and the Chipmunks*) and Josh Klausner (*Shrek the Third*), we feel confident that we have assembled a well respected team to produce a *Thomas* movie that families worldwide will be excited about and embrace."

The creative challenges involved in the making of the feature version of *Horrid Henry*, were, said Watts, "finding the right Henry, and then making his world believable, while keeping the audience engrossed and entertained for 90 minutes. In casting Theo Stevenson as Henry, we definitely made the right call, as for the rest, only time will tell," he said.

When it comes to choosing a studio partner for such a project, however, there is a wide divergence of opinion. For Pistor, "a potential studio will have to have a large reach in order to bring *Thomas* the movie to as many screens as possible. She added, "We are also looking for a studio willing to stand behind the project and commit the necessary financial and marketing resources."

For Elmendorff the best bet is a "joint collaboration so that ideas from all partners lead to the best possible outcome." But he accepts that, "dividing the risks and costs of the movie is also part of the consideration process."

Meanwhile, Watts looks for, "technical expertise, professionalism and empathy with the material."

Both Watts and Elmendorff said that, as Elmendorff put it, "The decision to green light the movie will be driven by the popularity of the series and phenomenal ratings." Watts concurred that, "The series must have been successful and the characters must have already connected with the audience. From the perspective of raising the finance it would also, ideally, have been successful outside its home territory," Watts explained. Additionally, the content must lend itself to a movie adaptation — turning short form animation into a full length feature requires a sustainable storyline with plenty of action, sub-plots, and in the case of *Horrid Henry*, lots of opportunities for visual comedy."

For Pistor, the choice to go ahead with the *Thomas The Tank Engine* movies was, "a natural decision to translate these classic stories into a next generation fantasy adventure film franchise." She added, "We expect, based on the current strength of our *Thomas & Friends* worldwide business, that the upcoming film will have global appeal."

Whatever the reasons, and despite the many challenges, there is no doubt that, right now, putting characters designed for little people onto the big screen is a booming business. ●

## NATPE

(Continued from Cover)

Some of them have simple tables or viewing boxes, so any packaging makes little sense. For companies eager to book suites at both shows, we are willing to talk to them on a case-by-case basis."

However, a few distributors said, in effect, "we have many issues with NATPE, and there is a great deal that we could say on the subject, but we prefer not to put it on record." At MIPCOM, one executive made an appointment to speak with *VideoAge* on the subject, but, by the time we turned up, that very person had been told by their superiors not to give the interview. Frecuencia Latina Internacional's Patricia Jasin was more candid. While she acknowledged that "the suites are spread over different towers," she worried that "it may be a problem for the buyers to keep appointments... We'll see how it goes. If it's not better [than last year] we may not get a suite the following year."

On the other hand, there seem to be many Latin distributors who are very happy with "the new NATPE." Alejandra Recasens at Telemundo commented, "It was a good start. Of course we are delighted with the move to Miami, not just because that is where we are based, but also because the East Coast is so much more accessible for both our Latin American clients and also Europeans, and this was reflected in a 30 percent increase in foot [traffic] on our stand — we simply could not be happier."

RCN's Maria Jose Ramos was enthusiastic about NATPE because of the increased attendance of Latin buyers in particular. She noted that the company will be equipped with two or three new telenovelas. Similarly, Caracol's Monica Ramon assured *VideoAge* that the company will be in Miami with new telenovelas. Marcel Vinay at TV Azteca was more specific: "Two new telenovelas are in production, and we're working on a co-production with Disney, so that will be ready for NATPE." Frecuencia's Jasin was happy to announce that *Against the Ropes*, which was nominated for an International Emmy Award, will be available, as will Uruguayan series *The Way I Love You* and one new telenovela that has yet to be named, among other product.

For his part, Jose Escalante of Latin Media Corporation will present his

product from a stand rather than a suite, where buyers will be able to find telenovela *Pushovers*, as well as animated product and formats, among other product. Likewise, according to Carolina Scheinberg of SBT, the company is "analyzing the possibility of having a stand," to display the new telenovelas and formats they'll bring to Miami. Fox Telecolombia's Ana Maria Barreto was enthusiastic that *Lynch* (a 13-episode series) would be available, since it was "too early to promote it at MIPCOM," as well as the third season of documentary *Taboo* and the third season of *Kdabra*.

In preparation for NATPE, Telefilms' Tomas Darcyl noted that the company purchases product in Toronto and at MIPCOM and AFM, and that new product will be available at NATPE.

Delmar Andrade at Brazil's Record TV Network added, "We will be at NATPE and we believe that 2012 will be fantastic for the Latin American broadcasters because of great productions, and the brand new version of *Rebeldes* will be offered there." ●

## The UV Cloud

(Continued from Cover)

DRM), a system that allows consumers to buy content digitally and store the rights to that content in a personalized "locker" or so-called cloud so that they can enjoy unlimited streaming for as long as a year, and three downloads to any device. Spearheaded by technology manufacturers such as Phillips, Toshiba and Hewlett-Packard, the Pleasanton, CA-based UV consortium is growing rapidly. With only 12 members in September 2008, DECE now has approximately 75 partners.

Basically, UV is called a cloud-based system because streamed content doesn't sit on a computer (or any other consumer storage device), but rather on DECE's system or "cloud." Traditionally, when content is stored on consumers' devices it's called a download, and can be a rental or a sale on only that device. When content sits on a "cloud" it can be streamed from any device and can be rented for a period (streaming) or acquired as electronic sell through (EST) as a download.

If UV sounds like science fiction, it's science fact now that Warner Bros. launched the first UV title, *Horrible Bosses*, in the U.S. At a MIPCOM 2011 conference, Justin Herz of Warner Bros. predicted "by Q2 or Q3 2012, significantly more than 50 percent of our catalogue will be available on UV."

Consumers are encouraged to open UltraViolet accounts and, if they purchased a UV-enabled DVD or Blu-ray title, in a store or online, the UV rights for that particular title are theirs simply by opening an account for free, with no credit card details required.



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## RFF & RCF: Italian Woes

Ever since Roman politicians succeeded in closing Milan's MIFED, the world's oldest film-television market, the Italian entertainment industry has been struggling to replace it with not one, but two similar events in Rome.

The first event is Roma Fiction Fest (RFF), now in its fifth year and under its third organizational structure. This year, it was moved to September 25-30 from its traditional July dates. The second is the sixth annual Roma Cinema Fest (RCF), to be held October 27-31. Still under the same structure, the RCF is nonetheless struggling to survive and to become meaningful, especially since RCF is competing with the much stronger American Film Market (AFM) in Santa Monica, California, taking place on November 2-9.

According to an article in *il Riformista*, this year Italy's Culture Ministry is cutting the 260,000 euro that RCF received in 2010 specifically to invite for-



eign buyers. RCF has a total annual budget of 13 million euro, of which 30 percent is funded by various state agencies. In comparison, the Venice Film Festival receives some 7.1 million euro per year from the government. At the same time, according to Italian trade magazine *Cinema&Video*, the budget for the RFF was reduced from seven million euro in 2010 to the current three million.

Meanwhile, despite its woes, RFF has attracted a good number of buyers, including executives from the U.S. and Eastern Europe, that were invited with expenses paid.

Pictured on the left are: Mediaset Distribution's Manuela Caputi, Ceska Televize's acquisition exec Alena Polednakova-Blahosova, Mediaset's Sonia Danieli and Chiara Sbarigia from the APT (organizer of this year's event) at the opening cocktail party held at the Parco dei Principi Hotel for the business section of the event.

## Prix Italia Stingy with U.K. Prizes

Britain, which usually rakes in awards at TV festivals, did not fare well at the 63rd annual Prix Italia. Participants at the radio-TV festival (organized by Italian State broadcaster RAI) met in what was the first Senate chamber of the Italian Republic's first Parliament for the presentation of prizes in 12 categories and many more sub-categories. The ceremony was held last September 23 in Turin. But to the U.K. went just one award: the Multimedia Prize for *The Guardian* newspaper's website. Two programs won two prizes each: *Tony's Revenge* from France2 and *Cease Fire* from Germany's ZDF.

Among the winners, the only program with solid international sales appeal was *Inside Ireland's Illegal Cigarette Trade* by Ireland's RTE, for which no representative showed up to receive the award. Similarly, there was no one from South Korea's KBS to receive the award for its *Don't Cry For Me Sudan*. On the other hand, Norway's NRK sent five representatives to receive the award for its *Operation Sea-Breeze*.

A full list of winners is available at Prix's website: [www.PrixItalia.rai.it](http://www.PrixItalia.rai.it)



Prix Italia winners at Italy's old Senate chamber in Turin

# Swiss Television Programs

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## Telefe Is The One

Argentina's Telefe International introduces **The Man of Your Dreams**, a comedy series following Hugo, a single father working at a matchmaking agency. Each episode includes a special guest star.

Romantic comedy **When You Smile** revolves around a successful professional whose life is turned upside down with the arrival of a son he never knew and a father he would prefer not to know.

In teen comedy **Superclumsy**, a teenage superheroine has three goals: To become a singer, save the world, and make her neighbor fall in love with her. Unfortunately, her plans tend to go awry. Luckily she has a younger brother, a best friend and a nanny to help her.

**The One** is a telenovela about an arrogant and ambitious lawyer who wins a trip to Spain that changes his life forever. He falls in love with



Mariana, an idealist lawyer. But each character represents a capital sin.

An unhappily married woman is given the opportunity to go back in time and live one year again in romantic comedy **A Year To Remember** (pictured). She'll discover that things aren't always what they seem.

In weight challenge **Peso x Peso**, contestants compete in physical and trivia competitions. The contestants are chosen by their weight, and for the final challenge, the members of each team stand on a scale and get closest to the weight presented by the host.

**Sábado Bus** is a general interest format that features interviews with celebrities over dinner and an audience participation contest in which the winner gets a car.

In other news, the Italian adaptation of Telefe's telenovela **Montecristo** is premiering this month on Italy's Canale5.

Stand RSV 14

[www.telefeinternacional.com.ar](http://www.telefeinternacional.com.ar)

## Record TV Reads The Bible

Brazil's Record TV Network is offering timeless tales to buyers. The story of Samson and Delilah follows a courageous, fearless



fighter and a beautiful and ambitious woman of a different religion.

**Esther, the Queen** tells the tale of a beautiful Jewish woman who marries the king of Persia and saves her people from destruction.

Things get messy when a group of friends pick the winning numbers to a multi-million dollar lottery in telenovela **Jackpot!** Before winning, the friends made a pact that each must accomplish a certain mission within one year to be entitled to the money.

**The Law and the Crime** series focuses on violence, drugs and corruption through the story of Catarina, a high-society woman who becomes police commissioner.

An historic town with a beautiful landscape and popular river is the setting of **River of Intrigues**. Everything is transformed when the arrival of a mega-project turns the quiet town into an international destination.

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## Telefilms' Star-Studded Films

Some of the biggest names in Hollywood can be found in Argentina-based Telefilms' feature films catalogue.

Starring Owen Wilson, Marion Cotillard, Rachel McAdams and Carla Bruni, **Midnight in Paris** (pictured) is a Woody Allen-directed romantic comedy that explores a young man's great love for the City of Light.

After losing his job, an affable middle-aged man named **Larry Crowne** (played by Tom Hanks) goes back to college to start over. While there, he develops a crush on his teacher (Julia Roberts).

**La Piel Que Habito (The Skin That I Live In)** is the latest from Spanish director Pedro Almodovar. A brilliant plastic surgeon haunted by tragedy creates a

synthetic skin that can withstand damage. His guinea pig is a mysterious and volatile woman.

The relationship between the stuttering King George VI of Britain and his speech therapist is at the center of **The King's Speech**. The film, which won four Academy Awards, including the Oscar for Best Picture, stars Colin Firth, Helena Bonham Carter and Geoffrey Rush.

In sci-fi thriller **Source Code**, an American soldier (played by Jake Gyllenhaal) wakes up in the body of a man who is the victim of a train bombing. He must relive the experience to determine who is responsible for it.

**Stand 09.05**  
[www.telefilms.com.ar](http://www.telefilms.com.ar)

## Lots of Passion at Telemundo

Telemundo Internacional's roster is spearheaded by telenovela **La Casa de al Lado**. The Conde family enjoys a privileged existence, but strange deaths have occurred in their home and illegal activity runs rampant in the family business. When lawyer Gonzalo Ibañez marries into the family, he goes on a mission to uncover the truth.

After they elope against their families' wishes, Lola and Andres are sent to prison and military school in **Mi Corazón Insiste En Lolca Volcán**. When Lola gets out of prison, she ends up marrying four men who all die shortly after the wedding. Will Lola's pride and determination keep her from reuniting with Andres, her true love?

After the death of her mother and brother and her father's abandonment, Amanda Monteverde is determined to do whatever it takes to protect her three younger sisters in **Flor Salvaje**.

After her drug lord boyfriend is killed, Teresa Mendoza, goes on the run, hiding out all over the world. **La Reina del Sur** (pictured) follows her



life over a 12-year period, until she takes the reigns of a worldwide drug trafficking empire.

Telemundo Internacional also presents bilingual lifestyle cable channel for young viewers, **mun2**. Content includes **RPM Miami**, **Beauties & The Boss**, **Jenni Rivera Presents Chiquis & Raq-C**, **Los Twiins**, **The mun2 Hook Up** and **The Chicas Project**.

Also available are telenovelas **El Laberinto de Alicia**, revolving around a school counselor who is believed unstable and **Témpano**, taking place on a cruise ship headed toward Patagonia.

**Stand A.021**  
[www.telemundointernacional.com](http://www.telemundointernacional.com)

## Azteca Runs from Destiny

Mexico-based Azteca tugs at viewers' heartstrings and sends chills up their spines. **Huérfanos (Orphans)** tells the story of three aristocratic young girls who lose everything when their parents die. They learn to survive in a harsher world, with the help of their nana, Santina.

In **Cielo Rojo (Under a Red Sky)**, Alma and Andres are meant for each other, but always seem to be pulled apart. Can prison, distance and new lovers really keep them away from their true love?

Emperatriz Jurado is betrayed by her former lover, and her newborn daughter is stolen from her. She swears to take revenge in **Emperatriz (Empress)** (pictured).

A retired wrestler named Lucho returns to the ring to support his family in comedy series **Lucho en Familia**.

The Cavazos family must deal with the troubles that have befallen their

## LATIN AMERICAN PRODUCT



pharmaceutical business Vitalab. Plus, a love story unfolds in **Bajo el Alma (Within My Soul)**.

Thriller series **Al Caer La Noche (When Night Falls)** explores hidden dangers that come to life when most of us are asleep.

An old conspiracy and the trials faced by an elite police force investigator are at the center of thriller series **Drenaje Profundo (Drowning City)**.

**Stand LR2.06**  
[www.comarex.tv](http://www.comarex.tv)

## Latin Media's Temptations

Miami-based Latin Media Corporation is at MIPCOM with several new titles.

Telenovela **Pushovers**, currently in production, tops the company's slate. It follows the adventures of a group of men who, after being laid off from their jobs, turn to a life of crime — with sometimes hilarious results.

Also on the telenovela roster is **First Lady**. Born poor, Sabina Astudillo moves to the capital city with one objective: to become the president's wife. She'll do anything she has to — lie, manipulate and cheat — to meet her goal.

Dr. Adam Jamil finds his loyalty tested in a love triangle with his own son in telenovela **Temptations of Love**.

The first season of heartwarming series **Life after Life** takes place in the prestigious Nataniel Cox Hospital and follows the doctors, technicians, surgeons, lawyers and prosecutors who work to give people transplants and

another shot at life.

**Ibn Battuta** tells the tale of the famous 14th century traveler, who went to North Africa, Asia Minor, India, Mesopotamia and China. The series takes viewers along for the ride in 3D animation.

Jose Escalante (pictured above) and Farid K. Ahmad are on hand at the Malaysian pavilion.

**Stand 5.19**  
[www.latinmediacorp.net](http://www.latinmediacorp.net)





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Disney Media Networks  
LATIN AMERICA



## Venevision's Got a Big Corazon

Love, jealousy and revenge are at the center of Venevision International's new and returning telenovelas. Patricia is a young woman who grows up with her strong and demanding grandmother, a wealthy landowner. When Patricia falls in love with a man that doesn't live up to her grandmother's standards, she must pay the consequences in **Corazón Apasionada**.

Natalia and Luis have been in love since childhood in **Natalia del Mar** (pictured). They refuse to let their social differences get in the way of their love, but a secret from the past changes everything in this telenovela.

Love story and police thriller combine in **La Viuda Joven**.

Eva Luna's life is turned upside down when she suspects her lover of killing her father in a hit-and-run accident. But there are sinister forces leading her to believe this lie, and the motive is love.

Six totally different women have one thing in common — the desire to be perfect. From extreme dieting to Botox to plastic surgery, the women in telenovela **La Mujer Perfecta** will do anything to look good.

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Stand 14.02

[www.venevisiointernacional.com](http://www.venevisiointernacional.com)

## Caracol Keeps Its Promises

Colombia's Caracol presents a program slate topped by **Broken Promises** (**La Promesa**), the story of three women — Ana, Seleni and Frida — who are victims of human trafficking. They learn that love is the key to escaping their torturous situations (pictured).

After being framed for a crime he didn't commit, the only job Emilio can find is that of a personal assistant. In comedic telenovela **The Secretary** (**El Secretario**), he must learn to fit in with his fellow assistants and cope with his burgeoning love for his engaged boss.

The GIC is an elite police group assigned to special cases in series **Infiltrated** (**Infiltrados**). The group solves crimes that involve ex-lovers, jealousy, and egos, complicating things even further.

In **The Witch** (**La Bruja**), a teacher named Amanda learns that she has supernatural powers. She uses them to acquire power and change the political course of her country.

**Yellow Team** (**Los Canarios**) takes a comical look at the lives of five taxi



drivers, and the characters they meet along the way.

**Love and Fear** (**Amar y Temer**) tells the story of a woman who stages her suicide to escape her husband and travels to Bogotá pretending to be a man. As Alberto, she enrolls in law school, and falls in love with a boxer.

Sara and Pablo are a couple of marriage counselors facing their own problems in **Couple's Therapy** (**Terapias de Pareja**).

Stand 09.24

[www.caracolinternacional.com](http://www.caracolinternacional.com)

## Televisa Runs A Double Life

Love is all around at Televisa Internacional. Ana Paula is a nurse who finds herself forced to marry her wheelchair-bound patient in **The One Who Couldn't Love** (pictured). Her life becomes difficult and the people around her become greedy, all while she pines for the true love her life.

After her husband disappears and is proclaimed dead, Angélica Estrada remarries. But when her husband returns, she finds herself married to two men. That story is interwoven with the tale of Cristóbal Lagos, a family man who's living a **Double Life**.

After the death of her wealthy husband, Ángela must move into a poor neighborhood with her daughter Lisa. She meets a handsome ecologist whose son is a pop star whom her daughter will fall in love with. Ángela also meets her ex-mother-in-law's butler and his wild family in **Hoping Heart**.

Zoe, Isabel and Lucía are close

## LATIN AMERICAN PRODUCT



friends. Isabel's love life has been cursed, Zoe is a former housewife who seduces every man she meets, and Lucía is a woman on track to become a nun before falling in love with a gigolo. Hilarity ensues in comedy series **Darling Sweetheart**.

**Pequeños Gigantes** is a talent competition format in which children ages four through 12 entertain through dance, song and charm.

Stand RSV 02

[www.televisainternacional.tv](http://www.televisainternacional.tv)

## Cisneros Gets Top Biz Tag

Adriana Cisneros de Griffin, vice chairman and vice president of Strategy for the Venezuelan-based Cisneros Group of Companies, was named one of Latin America's Top 50 Business Women by the editorial staff of the *Latin Business Chronicle*, part of the *Latin Trade Group*. The Cisneros Group operates TV networks and Venevision International, a Miami, Florida-based TV distribution company.

In 1998, Cisneros de Griffin's father, Gustavo Cisneros, chairman of the Cisneros Group, received an LT BRAVO Business Award as "International CEO of the Year" from the *Latin Trade Group*.

Cisneros de Griffin is a third-generation leader of the Cisneros Group, a privately owned media, entertainment, telecommunications and consumer products organization. Her grandfather, Diego Cisneros, founded the Cisneros Group of Companies in the 1920s.

Cisneros de Griffin also serves as president of the Fundación Cisneros, a non-profit foundation established by her parents to enhance education throughout Latin America, and to raise awareness of Latin American's contributions to world culture.

Pictured are Latin Trade Group's Rosemary Winters, Adriana Cisneros de Griffin, LTG's Joachim Bamrud and Mercedes Fernandez.



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## Starz Has Magic Up Its Sleeve

**S**tarz Media has a wide variety of series, thrillers and films on offer. In the *Magic City* nothing is what it seems: On New Year's Eve 1958-59, Castro's rebels take control of Havana, and the Kennedys, the Mob and the CIA are all staying at the Miramar Playa Hotel.

The gladiator rebellion continues in *Spartacus: Vengeance* (pictured). Violence, villainy and heroism are on display.

Animated series *Dan Vs.* follows the antics of cynical Dan and his sidekick Chris as they halfheartedly take revenge against everything that frustrates Dan.

It's up to family dogs Rusty and Cheri

to keep the peace and help Susan, Jake and their five kids enjoy the holiday in feature *Christmas Wedding Tail*.

Amanda and Jason are devastated when they discover that the baby girl they've just adopted from Eastern Europe may in fact be a *Stolen Child*.

Zeus must become *The Dog Who Saved Halloween* for his family when two "former" burglars make everything go awry.

The Onion brings its hard-hitting journalism to television through comedy series *Onion News Network*, hosted by Brooke Alvarez.

**MIPCOM Stand RSV 25/AFM Ste 607**  
[www.starzglobal.com](http://www.starzglobal.com)

## Opus Enters the Ring

**O**pus Distribution showcases a variety of new and returning movies and a new wrestling series. After twin sisters experience a terrible car accident, one falls into a coma and the other assumes her identity in film *Deadly Sibling Rivalry*.

*I Want Your Money* (pictured) investigates America's escalating taxation fights. The documentary uses interviews and satirical animation.

Professional wrestling series *Ring of Honor* showcases top in-ring action and is recognized for its athleticism and entertainment value.

When the lives of robbers, cops, teachers and teenagers intertwine, the results are fatal in *Bad Behaviour*.

Now available for digital platforms, *Septien*, which comes from the 2011



Sundance Film Festival, centers on a prodigal brother who returns to the family farm after a 20-year absence.

Ghosts visit a 16-year-old loner. Or are the *Spectres* just a figment of her imagination?

In *Truth About Kerry*, when an American woman dies on a beach in Ireland, her best friend travels overseas to find out exactly what happened.

**MIPCOM Stand 13.07/AFM Ste 866**  
[www.opusdistribution.com](http://www.opusdistribution.com)

## FM's Formats

**F**remantleMedia's format slate includes new talent formats *Hidden Stars*, in which the stars of today surprise unsuspecting future celebs with the help of family and friends, and *Don't Stop Me Now*.

Also available are *Body Bowling*, in which contestants become bowling balls in a game of tenpin bowling, and quiz show *Break the Safe*, in which pairs of contestants have 30 minutes to earn as much cash as possible, but they only have one second to grab it for themselves.

Romance is in the air when eight singles vacation together at *The Villa*.

**Stand RB1**  
[www.fremantlemedia.com](http://www.fremantlemedia.com)

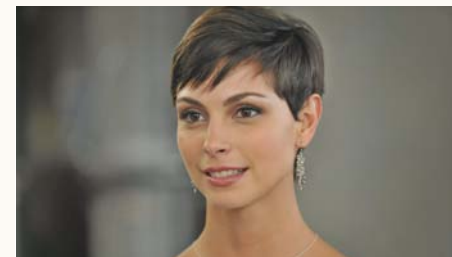
## Incendo Is Stealing Paradise

**I**ncendo comes equipped with a number of thriller films. When her partner is brutally murdered, an obstetrician scrambles to save her own life after discovering that she's the next victim in *Deadly Hope*.

After her sister is taken hostage, a criminal psychologist plunges headfirst into active duty to negotiate her sister's release in *Crisis Point*.

In *Burden of Evil*, a senator's daughter is kidnapped by a man who recently murdered the husband of a homicide detective. Now the homicide detective is called in to help.

*Do No Harm* tells the story of Emily, who overcomes a catatonic state with the help of her psychiatrist. The only problem: Emily's psychiatrist knows her weaknesses and kidnaps her.



Allison is devastated after her boyfriend is murdered by an intruder. But she's forced to *Look Again* when she begins to suspect that her best friend's new boyfriend is the culprit. Morena Baccarin stars (pictured).

Amanda is an intelligent engineer who loses her cool when her colleague Brendan steals and patents her groundbreaking idea. When Brendan is murdered, Amanda becomes the prime suspect in *Stealing Paradise* (working title).

A teacher feels *Exposed* when digitally fabricated pornographic photos of her are distributed to her students. She soon learns that she is the next target of a kidnapper.

[www.incendo.ca](http://www.incendo.ca)

## FME's Kids Division Conquers Cannes

**T**his MIPCOM marks the second anniversary of the launch of FremantleMedia Enterprises' (FME) Kids and Family Entertainment division. Sander Schwartz (pictured below), EVP, heads the growing division. According to Andrew Berman, VP International Distribution, Kids and Family Entertainment, this is the first time the division is at MIPCOM with a "very full slate of programming."

The FME kids' TV roster is headlined by comedy musical adventure series *The Aquabats Super Show!* This series features fictionalized personas of the real members of classic rock band The Aquabats using their music and super-



hero powers to battle evil. The show targets kids age six through 13.

Another show geared toward the younger set is preschool series *Tree Fu Tom*. Set in an enchanted world, eight-year-old Tom uses Tree Fu to transform into a superhero. FME co-produced the series with CBeebies' In-House Production. It will air on CBeebies in early 2012.

Honing in on the supernatural trend, *My Babysitter's A Vampire* (pictured) is a family-friendly tween and teen live action series that premiered on Disney Channel in the U.S. in 2011 and has already been commissioned for a second season by Canada's TELETOON. Among others, FME's Sander Schwartz and Bob Higgins serve as executive producers.



# THE PROPOSAL



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## RaiNews Is Gaining Viewership, Frustration

**C**orradino Mineo, director of Italy's RaiNews, the Rome-based 24/7 news TV service, is frustrated by the drawbacks imposed on his channel by its parent company, state broadcaster RAI. According to Mineo, the channel, which can now be seen worldwide, would be set to start broadcasting in English and Arabic, and not just Italian, by the coming spring if RAI released the necessary funds. RaiNews would join other major state broadcasters such as France's France 24, Germany's DW, Japan's NHK and many others, which also broadcast in English.

In terms of added international coverage, Giovanni Celsi of RaiWorld, RAI's division for world distribution, announced that in Canada, the news channel is now carried by Rogers Cable Systems.

In a frank interview, Mineo (pictured on the right with Giovanni Celsi) mentioned that he cannot even control the news channel's website, and is therefore unable to create synergies. Another sore point is that he is unable to properly



monetize the large news, special reports and documentaries that the channel has accumulated over the years, since he doesn't have a marketing unit. "We don't even have our own budget," he said, "we have to get by with whatever RAI gives us."

Finally, Mineo said he would like to have more control over advertising, which right now is handled as an afterthought by RAI's house ad agency, SIPRA.

Despite its challenges, RaiNews is considered Italy's best news service, and is available via digital TV broadcast, satellite, cable, IPTV and streaming.

## Rights Do Wrong To Rai Int'l

**A**ccording to Daniele M. Renzoni, director of Rai International (pictured below with RaiWorld's Giovanni Celsi), the radio-TV channel for Italians worldwide, his main challenge in preparing the TV channel schedule has to do with international rights. Indeed, many Italian performers won't release the rights outside Italy, preventing Renzoni from selecting popular pro-



grams from other channels within the umbrella of Italy's state broadcaster, RAI.

While 40 percent of Rai International programming consists of its own productions, Renzoni fills the rest of the schedule with the best of what other RAI channels offer, including eight news editions and one sports news edition from all RAI channels, each day.

From RAI's studios in Rome, Rai Int'l sends three feeds outside Europe, distributed by RAI's RaiWorld: one for the Americas, one for Africa and the third for Australasia. The channel is available on all platforms, including streaming and downloads.

Renzoni mentioned that, in the case of RAI-produced programs, some of the more popular artists re-acquired their international rights and are selling the programs internationally themselves. The problem could be alleviated if RAI demanded language rights instead of territorial rights.

La edición Latina de *VideoAge* con la previa de NATPE

La edición de diciembre de *VideoAge* pondrá su foco enteramente en la TV Latinoamericana.

Temas centrales: La producción local en Latinoamérica, Telenovelas en Miami, los latinos en el ATF, presencia latina en MIPCOM, y latinos en el AFM

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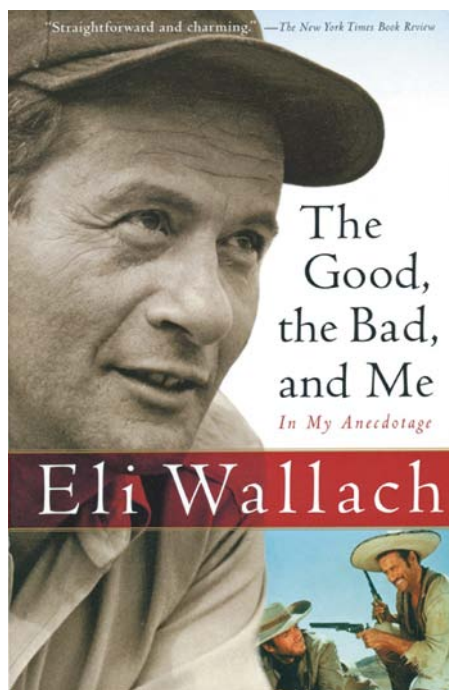
## Eli Wallach's Spaghetti Western Was *Al Dente*

**"F**rom this you can make a living?" This is the question stage/film actor Eli Wallach's father put to him each time he spoke of his desire to become an actor. But Wallach persevered, and his 2005 memoir is as charming as its title, *The Good, the Bad, and Me: In My Anecdote* (Harcourt, 312 pages, \$14), which is borrowed from the spaghetti western he appeared in with Clint Eastwood.

The spaghetti western Wallach alludes to in the title is his most recognizable film, but, as he recalled, shooting the movie in Italy wasn't easy. When it came time to shoot a scene in which a bridge is destroyed by dynamite, Wallach and Eastwood were just as startled as director Sergio Leone when the bridge exploded before the cameras started rolling. The man responsible for the explosion pushed the button too soon, and the bridge had to be rebuilt and destroyed again.

Wallach exploded onto Broadway in *The Rose Tattoo* in 1951, and he confides that even as a young boy growing up in Little Italy in New York, "Reenacting episodes that I had seen in movies always gave me a sense of power." Wallach's determination to act remains evident, as he continued to perform in his 80s while battling physical pain due to arthritic hips. However, the road to the stage was not without detours.

The first detour came in 1932 from his brother Sam, a teacher who was adamant that his younger siblings should receive an education, Great Depression or not. Since his childhood, Wallach's family wasn't enamored of his desire to become an actor, so Wallach "kept silent, never mentioning [his] dream," and went off to school. However, while in college, Wallach joined the Curtain Club, and he "knew then and there that this was to be [his] life's work. Nothing — *nothing* — would deter me." But Wallach was sidetracked again after his 1936 college graduation, as his family tried to convince him to give up his dreams of the stage to



become a teacher. After failing the teachers' exam, his sister Sylvia helped him secure an audition for the Neighborhood Playhouse theater school. Wallach was finally on his way to becoming an actor.

However, another detour came when Wallach was drafted as a medic in World War II. Even at war, the resourceful Wallach found a way to exercise his acting muscles. Although he was forced to put his pursuit of Broadway "in cold storage," he and a group of men from his unit put on a play. The performance was such a hit that his colonel arranged for the group to perform in a number of other hospitals.

Wallach does a good job of describing the influence the new medium of television in the early 1950s. He describes television as a "strange hybrid [because] it used the machinery of filmmaking, but at the same time had to satisfy the demands of networks and advertisers." At that time, the "major film studios did not permit their stars...to appear in a free medium," leaving the door wide open for New York stage actors. Wallach was intrigued by television, and after he and his wife, stage actress Anne Jackson, appeared on David Susskind's *Play of the Week*, Susskind approached Wallach and Jackson with an idea; he wanted to turn *Lullaby* into a series, assuring the couple

that if the series became a success, their children would never have to work. To most, the offer would have been very tempting, but while discussing the matter with her husband in private, Jackson "wrinkled her brow, and said, 'Why shouldn't the children work?'" The two decided against doing the series.

Wallach uses his experiences to show how film and stage cross paths. Throughout his career, he appeared in a number of plays and movies — the play credits listed in the back of this book number 27, while his film credits amount to 97. After turning down a role in the film *From Here To Eternity* in order to act in the Tennessee Williams play *Camino Real* (the movie role later went to Frank Sinatra), Wallach made good on his next movie offer.

With *Baby Doll*, Wallach was finally ready to see himself on the big screen. However, he had doubts about leaving the stage for celluloid, as he recalls, "From the time I left the army, I had concentrated on stage work," and he was afraid to leave it behind. However, movies proved a "magical magnet" for Wallach, and although he was at first reluctant to exit the theater — even for a short time — to try his hand at movie acting, he would continue to do both types of acting throughout his career, moving from stage to screen and back again, with transitions that weren't always seamless.

While filming *The Misfits* with Clark Gable and Marilyn Monroe (both appearing in their last roles before their deaths), "Each day's delay in completing the film came into direct conflict with a contractual deal [he] had" for the Broadway production of Eugène Ionesco's *Rhinoceros*. Leo Kerz, the New York producer, antsy about Wallach's absence, signed another actor to replace Wallach, asking him to "Tell Gable and Monroe that you have to return." Despite the tension, Wallach's agent enlisted Actors' Equity, the actors' union, and he was able to appear in *Rhinoceros* as originally scheduled.

In addition to interfering with his stage career, Wallach demonstrates how

movies impacted his personal life. He made "several movies that [took him] away from home for long periods of time." To ease his nerves, he rationalized these career decisions by telling himself that he needed to work because he and his family had "big expenses." This rationalization serves as a reminder to the reader that for Wallach, acting was also a means to make a living. However, the memoir becomes less personal after Wallach tells of his college years, and the reader sees less of Wallach's interactions with his wife and three children and more of his film acting experiences. Wallach replaces personal stories with professional ones. While these stories are refreshing in that Wallach is not simply name-dropping, but actually telling worthwhile stories about acting and the people behind the characters they played (Monroe, whom he credits with earning him a role in *The Misfits*, babysat for his children on occasion), the memoir might have benefited from more personal anecdotes.

Throughout the book, Wallach draws a distinction between film and stage: Film is the place to be to make money and be remembered, while the stage is a place where great actors are remembered only by those who saw them perform. He underscores a telling difference when he states, "I had a growing family, I decided enough 'art' for a while; I was going to try to get rich and famous. This meant facing the camera." However, Wallach was not without his qualms about becoming wealthy off of filmmaking. When he played a murderer in *The Lineup*, Wallach worried that he'd "made a Faustian deal...The money seemed more important than the challenge of acting in a worthwhile project." For Wallach, the theater "remains my first love." While he openly admits that "the money is better and the exposure is greater with film, movies are not as much fun."

Reading Wallach's memoir, however, *is* fun. He shares charming stories about early relationship woes and about how he spent Christmas break in college. In addition, he enhances the book with well-placed humor that keeps the reader on his toes and eager to read more. For example, while performing on stage for Winston Churchill in London, Wallach noticed that Churchill "sat like a bulldog...and never changed his expression." To this day, he does not know whether Churchill "turned the damn hearing aid off or on."

Both industry insiders and the general public will be intrigued by Wallach's book and learn from his reflections on how theater and film collide. *The Good, the Bad, and Me: In My Anecdote* is a worthwhile and enjoyable read for both Wallach fans and those who never have seen him perform — either on stage or on camera.

Wallach prefers live acting to film because "I come alive with the lights." In this memoir, Eli Wallach comes alive on page, too. **SA**

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## AFM Movies

(Continued from Cover)

some of them, the product that they're looking for at AFM varies from what they seek at MIPCOM.

Since buyers tend to reflect consumers' preferences, *VideoAge* looked at some current trends to predict what might be hot at AFM 2011. Based on Box Office Mojo's 2011 consumer film-market data, the number one genre has been sequels (like the newest installment of *Harry Potter*), cornering a 40 percent market share. This is followed by animation (e.g. *Kung Fu Panda 2*) with close to 18 percent; comedies (e.g., *The Hangover Part 2*), with more than 15.4 percent; superhero films (e.g. *Thor*), with 15.3 percent; family movies (e.g. *Mr. Popper's Penguins*), with 3.9 percent; dramas (e.g. *Jane Eyre*), with 2.6 percent and chick flicks (e.g. *Something Borrowed*) with 1.5 percent.

But then, if one takes into account the top-grossing genres from 1995 to 2011 as furnished by *The Numbers* newsletter, we notice that comedies were first with 23.97 percent market share, followed by adventure (19.80 percent), drama (17.66 percent), action (16.80 percent), thriller (7.85 percent), romance (5.93 percent), horror (4.78 percent) and documentary (1.1 percent).

Of course, there is another way to judge a movie, and that is its return on investment (ROI), a factor dear to all producers and distributors. For example, according to the newsletter *Financial Edge*, the best ROI comes from the horror and thriller genres. This is followed by documentaries, dramas, romances and comedies — while action-adventure is last.

Here's what the execs *VideoAge* surveyed had to say about the genres in demand at AFM: There is an "endless demand for horror movies," said Classic Media's Doug Schwalbe. Larry Goebel of Imagination Worldwide concurred: "We've had a lot of success with thrillers and well-done, well-marketed horror films." He added, "Horror tends to come in cycles. There's always a market for it, but sometimes it's better than others. It's not like way back, in the '80s and '90s, when you'd see a video distributor from Germany with four different labels — horror, thriller, family, how-to. There are fewer distributors, releasing less product, with more of an emphasis on quality."

A majority of the companies that attended MIPCOM are presenting new content in Santa Monica. Yet, a lot of similar products can be found on the table at both markets. Among the companies bringing different product to AFM is Opus Distribution. The company's Ken DuBow noted that they're hopping on the horror movie bandwagon. DuBow's Opus is one of the film companies that opted not to exhibit under the IFTA umbrella at MIPCOM. "The umbrella stand is an excellent deal for people, but my problem is that the tables are set very close together. It's an issue of discomfort for buyers, so [I went for] a full-sized stand," he said.



Loews Santa Monica Hotel might raise rates and IFTA is considering moving its AFM headquarters to the L.A. Live Complex in downtown Los Angeles

D3Telefilm has some seven new products on offer at AFM, and Screen Media Ventures is launching two new titles. In the weeks leading up to the AFM, Screen Media Ventures was working toward possibly adding three more titles to the list. Vision Films expected to have at least three new features to distribute. Not to be left out, The Fremantle Corporation is displaying new features, new mini-series, and new co-productions, as is Starz Entertainment, which is releasing new titles.

At MIPCOM, Cinemavault reported that it was looking to pick up another product to display, but it typically doesn't bring anything new to the November market. Similarly, RHI planned to bring the same products to AFM as it did to MIPCOM. Although Echo Bridge Entertainment didn't plan to launch anything new when *VideoAge* questioned them at MIPCOM, there will be screenings of footage and premieres of two new products.

Jonathan Wolf, executive vice president and managing director of the AFM (run by IFTA), said he doesn't worry that AFM and MIPCOM compete. "Buyers at the AFM are discovering feature films long before they are ever introduced at MIPCOM or any other TV Market." It's those in the market for films-for-TV that make it worth film distributors' time and money to attend MIPCOM.

To Opus' DuBow, "MIPCOM is the singular best television market of the year. It's broadcast-oriented, but you see DVD buyers at MIPCOM, too. We are now doing better with digital than with broadcast. The money has flip-flopped. [MIPCOM's] Reed Midem is incredible at attracting cutting-edge buyers, and there are tons of digital buyers there," he said.

Tomas Darcyl of Argentina's Telefilms sees the market as an opportunity to sell and buy films. "[MIPCOM] is for us, on one hand, a sales market, since we will meet our most important clients and, on the other hand, an event that gives us the opportunity to purchase 'made for TV' movies that, if well chosen and with good quality production, can give excellent rating results to all free TV channels in the [Latin America] region."

But Doug Schwalbe of Classic Media tells us he leaves the film sales to the AFM, and focuses on TV series only at MIPCOM. "We're less likely to bring TV movies until we see how the new model in home entertainment is going to work for TV movies. We really need networks to finance them, and we can't count on video

and DVD buyers anymore," he said. In addition, many executives at MIPCOM noted that they bring more documentaries to MIPCOM than they do to the AFM.

When it comes to buyers, across the board the execs said that their strategies are pretty much the same at MIPCOM and the AFM. Many of the buyers that come to both markets have usually begun talking with the executives at MIPCOM and subsequently close deals at the AFM through follow-up calls, e-mails, and meetings. Of the new buyers at the AFM, many have found that there is a greater Latin American and Asian presence, as well as a large contingent of digital and home video buyers.

As a whole, the AFM, which offers the opportunity to reach key broadcasters, has a more theatrical focus, with the large volume of films on display, while MIPCOM has a greater distributor presence.

As Ken DuBow put it, "If you're not seen, you're not remembered," so film distributors make an effort to attend both markets.

Larry Goebel and his Imagination Worldwide team, on the other hand, did not attend MIPCOM this year for the first time in six years. "It was nothing negative against MIPCOM. It was just about timing. MIPCOM is four weeks before the AFM, when we're in the process of acquiring films. We're just not ready to announce things yet," he said. Goebel also stressed that MIPCOM's IFTA stand is a very cost-effective way for independents to exhibit, and is keeping his mind open as to whether he'll exhibit at MIP-TV in the spring.

Besides the market's proximity to MIPCOM, another potential problem looms ahead for the AFM with the possible move in 2013 from the attractive Santa Monica Loews Hotel to the unappealing L.A. Live Complex in downtown Los Angeles. The move is reportedly due to increased costs at the Loews, but, for now, the official position is that there isn't an official position. ●

## The UV Cloud

(Continued from Page 4)

Once consumers have created UV accounts, they can watch movies and TV shows anywhere in the world from a wide variety of devices (up to 12 devices can be registered to their accounts), since they own the UV rights to the purchased content. Plus, up to five family members can be registered on a single household account.

According to Mark Teitell, general manager of DECE/UltraViolet, the "alliance came together because they thought [current] digital distribution so far hasn't been working well for the consumer or the industry." At the MIPCOM conference, Teitell went

on to say that "the idea [behind UV] fundamentally is that when a consumer buys a movie or TV show, they're not just getting a single digital file, they're not just getting a disc, they're actually getting a set of rights that lets them use all of those things: downloaded files, streaming and physical media. What we're really trying to do is bring together the best of two different worlds that don't exist today in the consumer view," he stressed.

The first "world," according to Teitell, is the way that physical media works. This means that UV allows consumers to own a physical copy of a movie or TV show. The second is everything that cloud-based access can offer, such as streaming content to any device, and the ability to back up (or save) content.

Initially, UV will be rolled out in the U.S. with movies, including the aforementioned *Horrible Bosses*, followed by *Green Lantern*, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2*, *Friends With Benefits* and *The Smurfs* from Warner Bros. and Sony Pictures Entertainment. One title, Warner Bros.'s *One Tree Hill*, is slated to be the first episodic TV program in UV, but no release date has been set yet.

So, given the fact that streamed content doesn't sit on consumers' devices, one of the issues raised at the Cannes conference was — who will pay for the cost of streaming? The consensus was that retailers would carry the cost, and then use that relationship to sell the consumer other audiovisual products; although Herz commented, "to date the industry has done a terrible job of introducing the consumer to digital." He stressed, "It is very important that this cost is not borne by the consumer." But, with streaming currently priced at around \$0.06 per GB, and an average movie requiring just 1.4 GB to stream, some participants considered the importance of this issue to be too overstated.

EST has profit margins that are much higher than a DVD sale (which averages 65 percent) because there are no manufacturing costs. At the same time, UV allows studios to keep a sort of "stable instability" with their middlemen. But, history has proven that consortiums like UV have rocky corporate structures, as the Hulu experience demonstrates. With close to 27 million viewers per month, Hulu can be considered a success, however its ownership structure (Disney, News Corp. and Comcast/NBC Universal) created conflicts of interest that have prevented Hulu from growing.

Despite the launch of UV in the U.S., Teitell declined to state how and at what level UV would be priced to the consumer, insisting, "That is a matter for the content supplier and their retail partner." He added, "My expectation is we'll actually see [as with] everything else, experimentation."

Significantly, Disney and Disney's shareholder Apple are not part of the consortium, and in October 2009, The Walt Disney Company announced that it was developing a competing service called Keychest. However, members of the UV panel at MIPCOM were quick to point out that although consumers can't purchase UV content from iTunes, they will be able to stream content to Apple devices, such as iPads. ●

# VIDEOAGE INTERNATIONAL

AT THE  
**AFM 2011**

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# M Y T W O C E N T S

never realized how complex simplicity can be. Take the fashion industry, for example. It spends billions and involves the best minds just to give the illusion that style is simple. Indeed, the simple life takes a lot of work. Ditto for the car industry where “simplicity” is everything. Indeed, cars are now so simple to operate that they can even park themselves. The downside is that to repair new cars, MIT engineers are needed, while before any high school dropout could do it.

But, the mother of all simplicity is the financial sector, where people put their savings in complex derivatives, with the illusion that it is a simple way to make money.

Now, before researching for this editorial, I didn't realize that in most of the aforementioned statements, I'm actually paraphrasing someone.

Someone like John Maeda, president of the Rhode Island School of Design who in 2006 wrote a book published by MIT, *The Law of Simplicity*. Before that, in 1996, there was another MIT book in the same vein, *The Sciences of the Artificial*, by the late Carnegie Mellon University professor Herbert Simon.

But, when talking about simplicity, one could go back as far as the 1200s with St. Thomas Aquinas who stated, “God is infinitely simple.”

In his book, Prof. Simon touches on the general assumption that, in reality, simplicity is very complicated. Prof. Maeda's book, on the other hand, focuses mostly on technology — with DVD players having too many menus, and instruction booklets as big as telephone directories.

As far as Maeda is concerned, most of his book could have been referred to simply as the urgent “need for standardization.” Indeed, when the “Industry of Obsolescence” decided to finance politicians' campaigns so that they would remove standards (aka, rules), everything that was then simple and durable became complicated and disposable.

So, nowadays simplicity seems to be simply everywhere... But it's an illusion that, as Prof. Simon stated, only masks complexity. And the television industry is not an exception. Perhaps — and unfortunately — television operates in the old paradigm that complexity is the way of the future.

Even though simplicity tends to be easy to explain, in the television industry it is hard to implement because of its stubbornly complex business model. But, according to a paper by technology writer and media consultant Clay Shirky, there will be *The Collapse of Complex Business Models*. In his paper, Shirky uses as a basis the 1988 Joseph Tainter book, *The Collapse of Complex Societies*. Tainter looked at several societies that gradually arrived at a high level of sophistication and then suddenly collapsed (e.g., the Romans, the Mayans).

According to Shirky, the thinking of traditional media is that, for example, Web users will have to pay for content, or else the content providers will have to stop making programs in the costly and complex way they now do. The problem: They don't know how to produce cheap content.

The solution, in Shirky's view, comes from Amy Smith, an MIT professor who also runs the Development Lab, which creates simple and cheap engineering solutions for the developing world. Among the rules of thumb she offers for building in that environment is this: “If you want something to be 10 times cheaper, take out 90 percent of the materials.” Shirky's conclusion is that traditional media has to follow Smith's rule. Except, “for ‘materials’ substitute ‘labor.’”

It is simple reasoning, but simple explanations tend to be the correct ones. What's surprising though is that academia — which being under the influence of intellectuals tends to complicate simple matters with a formula inversely proportional to their knowledge — starts to make sense.

*“In the television sector simplicity is hard to implement because of its stubbornly complex business model.”*



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