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ContentAsia is taking a break for the holidays. We will be back on 11 January. Here's wishing you the happiest of holidays and mounds of good things for 2016!

2015 closes mixed

SVOD, exec movement, censorship, production dominate conversations

2015 closes on a mixed note, with optimistic licensing and sales reports out of a ATF market in early December; uncertainty about the impact of the exploding SVOD market; high OTT/mobile activity; concerns about the 2016 appetite for original regional production; and some major executive movement.

Full story on page 5

iflix crosses one million member mark

SVOD platform closes 2015 tight with Malaysia's TM

Southeast Asian SVOD platform, iflix, has crossed the one-million sign up mark, closing the year with three markets – Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand – and content deals with 60 distributors.

The Malaysia-based platform has not disclosed how many of the one million members are paying for the service.

The new sign-up milestone was announced only days after iflix tied up with Telekom Malaysia (TM) to offer certain high-speed broadband subscribers a 12-month subscription at no additional charge. The deal will be extended across TM's other broadband packages later.

Financial details of the iflix-TM deal have not been disclosed.

The packages are valued at RM96/US$22 per subscriber for the 12 months.

Separate sign-ups or log-ins for TM customers to iflix will not be required. iflix says its system will recognise users on TM connections and will tag multi-screen devices using proprietary technology.

This is TM's first collaboration with an OTT player and iflix's first in Southeast Asia, said Jeremy Kung, executive vice president, new media and chief executive officer, TMNet.

iflix, which is being offered to TM's UniFi and Streamyx subscribers, will run alongside TM's HyppTV IPTV/pay-TV service, which offers about 122 SD/HD channels.

Kung called the two services complementary. "This is a win-win situation for both parties and their customers and for us... is in line with our brand promise of Life Made Easier," he said.

Kung added that TM remains "open

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Stingray buys Aus music outfit for A$12m

1st deal under new Asia alliance with Creevey's MCA

Canadian digital music provider, Stingray Digital Group Inc, is acquiring Australia's Digital Music Distribution (DMD) in an A$12-million/US$8.6-million deal facilitated by Gregg Creevey's Singapore-based Multi Channels Asia (MCA).

The Australia deal is the first announced after MCA and Stingray rolled out their Asia-Pacific partnership in November this year (*ContentAsia*, 16 November 2015).

66% of the transaction – US$5.7 million – will be paid to DMD up front, with a 34% holdback to be released on the completion of post-sale requirements.

DMD provides digital music services to the public, broadcasters and other media suppliers as well as brand partners. Services include 29 audio TV channels for pay-TV platform Foxtel. The audio TV channels will be integrated under the Stingray brand after the acquisition is complete.

Creevey's multi-year agreement with Stingray involves Stingray providing MCA with growth capital in exchange for an expanded foothold in the Asia region.

The deal includes a provision for Stingray to become a shareholder in MCA.

This is the eight-year-old MCA's first outside investment.

A Mandarin kids channel created to entertain, educate and empower preschoolers with a unique Asian perspective.

A new channel from Celestial Tiger Entertainment.

Who was at....

HBO Asia/ContentAsia Women's Celebrating Women in Media in Asia Champagne Breakfast

Andrea Wong, Sony Pictures Television/Sony Pictures Entertainment

Chrstine Fellowes, NBCUniversal

Angeline Poh, MDA Singapore

Trang Le, Multimedia JSC Vietnam

Roxanne Barcelona, GMA Network; Rachel Simon, Leng Raymundo, ABS-CBN

Soo Hui Lee, StarHub; Yasmin Zahid, HBO Asia

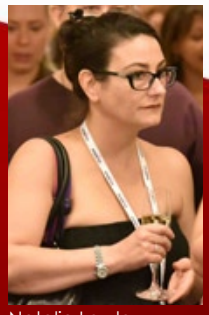
Leena Singarajah, Scripps Networks, Michele Schofield, A+E Networks; Fotini Paraskakis, Endemol Shine

Kelly Jang, Fox International Channels

Lee Mee Fung, DW

Alli Farrell, Sarah Walker, Beedo Chan, Sony Pictures Television; Magdalene Ew, HBO Asia

Min Lim, Double Vision


Natalie Lawley, Escapade Media

Yee Shan Heng, Scripps Networks; Vilia Chia, HBO Asia

Midi Stormont, Flame Distribution

Emma Vaughn, NBCUniversal

HBO HOME BOX OFFICE

contentasia women

Petra Schneider, Alex Lenz, DW

Robi Stanton, Turner

Khim Loh, The Moving Visuals Co

Charmaine Wong, NBCUniversal; Sandie Lee, Rewind Networks/Hits; Katheryn Lim, HBO Asia

Lina Tan, Red Communications; Charmaine Kwan, Discovery Networks

Marini Ramlan, Media Prima Malaysia; Karen Appatharai-Wiggins

Wendy Hogan, migme; Cecile Tiano, Marian Williams, Discovery Networks; Jennifer Batty, RTL CBS Entertainment; Celeste Campbell-Pitt, Endemol Shine

Tripta Singh, Zee Entertainment; Po Linh Ho, Double Vision; Marianne Lee, Turner

Syarizhan Mansor, Viacom; Michelle Ching; Indra Suharjono, Next Media Animation Taiwan

Najwa Abu Bakar, Astro Malaysia

Clare Seo

Jennifer Doig, SPT Networks Asia; Jeanne Leong, Jude Davidson, BBC Worldwide; Siti Noraini, SPT Networks Asia

Natalie Gee, NBCUniversal; Suzanne Sutherland, Blonde Media

Sarah Jacks, Scripps Networks; Paula Mason, BDA; Joan Leong, activeTV Asia

2015 closes on a mixed note

China, SVOD, censorship & Michelle Guthrie's rumoured new job dominate conversations

Kick off of the MDA's Creators' Space initiative in Singapore

2015 closes on a mixed note, with optimistic licensing and sales reports out of a strong Asia TV Forum (ATF) market in Singapore in early December; uncertainty about the impact of the exploding SVOD market on the rest of Asia's video environment; high-activity on the mobile/OTT front; concerns about the 2016 appetite for original regional production; and some major executive movement coming down the pipe.

And then there is a whole lot of whispering in Singapore about lighter (and maybe even little or none at all) censorship accompanied by a higher focus on parental control. The reason? Nothing official, but we imagine a connected world, a different approach, blocking technology that gives parents unprecedented control over what comes into their homes; the ongoing battle against piracy... or maybe that's all just wishful thinking? Either way, we'll know soon enough.

Will an evolved content environment entice millions of viewers to give up their VPNs, pirate sites and thumb-drive-swapping syndicates? Show me the new rules when they're ready and I'll let you know.

On the new jobs/roles/appointment front, watch this space... There are a few, including former Star CEO Michelle Guthrie's expected appointment as the new head of Australia's ABC. No official announcements had been made as we went to press on this issue, but Aussie papers are full of it and their sources seem good. There's also nothing official yet on who will head up Netflix in Asia.

Until then, here's how the world of Asian television ends 2015 and looks forward to 2016.

GATHERING STREAM The ATF closed with new Asia content initiatives, deals, plans and launches being announced to the last minute and both buyers and sellers reporting a busier market than last year. For many, Asia's under/un-served video entertainment markets continue to tantalise.

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While acquisitions look like they are being driven by mainland Chinese online giants, distributors everywhere say streaming platforms across the region are ending 2015 in high-buy mode.

Some of the activity is being driven by Netflix's arrival in some countries and imminent arrival in others. Anxious incumbents are stepping up their game, looking left and right for outsiders threatening to eat their lunch.

"Everybody is preparing for Netflix's entry. Six or seven players have contacted us and they want to launch before Netflix," says Hoyoung Jung, Hit Entertainment's senior manager, content distribution.

The same streaming scenario is playing out in other parts of the world. all3media International chief executive, Steve Macallister, points to 3,000 video-on-demand brands in Europe alone.

"So there is a lot of opportunity for producers and distributors like us," he says. all3media has 7,000 hours of content, 22 production companies and first-look deals with eight more.

DHX Media's territory manager, Thom Chapman, agrees. There has been "an uptick in digital and OTT buyers," he said during ATF. This may have something to do with his offer; of DHX's 11,000 half hours, about 3,000 are already dubbed and available in Mandarin.

Asian programmers say OTT has opened up new avenues for genres.

"Emerging OTT services showed interest in our news clips that we just started to sell," says Nippon TV's senior director of international business development, Shigeko (Cindy) Chino.

At the same time, some say the market has already taken into account the OTT uptick, and that OTT acquisitions are slowing.

"There is not as much digital as two years ago when OTT first kicked in, says Robby Amar, Marvista Entertainment's executive director, distribution. This may be because OTT Is more established and platforms already have their libraries, he adds.

What is certain is that multiscreen has made complex rights conversations the order of the day.

Alfred Haber Distribution vice president, Andrew Haber, said the industry "had to be willing to adjust to the realities of the new rights. The days of [just] free-TV and cable TV are all over".

Nevertheless, free-TV buyers were out in force at the ATF, says DHX Media's Chapman. "I've met more local free-TV buyers than I have in the past," he said during the show. Buying patterns are changing,

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he adds, with "more direct channels to work with than sub-distributors".

Many distributors came to the ATF this year with deals already signed. Distributors such as Bomanbridge Media and Beyond Distribution say they used the opportunity to follow up and extend conversations started at Mipcom in October.

CBS Studios's Asia vice president/MD, Nicole Sinclair, says the timing of ATF is a great opportunity to discuss midseason and upcoming summer shows, as well as – this year – to talk about the new *Star Trek* series coming in 2017.

Some reported a strong three days of new deal-making and higher levels of walk-ins this year, with leads into new markets such as Japan and Cambodia.

Turkish broadcaster/distributor Kanal D added Japan and Cambodia to its list of talks during the ATF. The company already has a presence in Malaysia, Vietnam and Indonesia. International sales executive, Ezgi Ural, says Asia has been "hard to enter" but "we really believe in the Asian market and are truly excited to get in".

German broadcaster Deutsche Welle (DW) closed the ATF with four new deals and a fifth in sight. Broadcasters in China, South Korea and Thailand picked up 50 hours of DW factual, science and lifestyle content. "It has been a very good market, very different from last year," says DW distribution director, Petra Schneider.

LONG LIVE LINEAR Deal-signing and events continued through to the final hours of the market. Some of these include linear carriage deals, which put a smile on the faces of linear channel operators, who are being somewhat overshadowed by all the attention being lavished on new VOD darlings.

ATF drew to a close at lunch time on the Friday with a new kids channel carriage signing in Singapore and news that Mexico's TV Azteca is ramping up its longstanding Asia presence via new international channel, I Drama.

Mad About You China, Sony Pictures Television

TV Azteca's I Drama launches in April 2016. "The idea is to bring Asian content to the world and take Mexican content outside," says Comarex's sales director and project development head for Asia, Martha Contreras.

I Drama will carry content from all over the world, either dubbed or subtitled for local markets.

Another linear channel with Asia plans – eventually – is from Canada's Gusto. "The goal is to bring the Gusto channel to Asia," says Gusto president and chief executive, Chris Knight.

Also in Singapore, new Mandarin kids edutainment channel, MaxToon from MyChinaChannel, signed a carriage deal with StarHub. The new channel is scheduled to land in Singapore in the first half of 2016.

The MaxToon initiative includes co-development of original productions, which adds a global syndication element to the business plan. One of the learning-in-Mandarin programmes is slated to start production in June 2016.

A LOCAL AGENDA Distributors say the shift towards local content in most markets is continuing.

"When they source international content, buyers are really looking for high quality shows," says GRB's international sales vice president, Benn Watson.

The shift inwards is perhaps most marked in Korea, which is not acquiring much non-Korean content this year.

"Local content [in Korea] has become so strong," says Bomanbridge Media's Fleck.

Demand for genres ranges wide, with high demand for fast-paced, younger skewing and comic shows.

"If it is young-targeted, it is easier to sell," Hit Entertainment's Jung says. Hits' priority international markets are topped by China and followed by Indonesia, with Japan and Australia topping the more mature markets.

Red Arrow International is prioritising Vietnam and Thailand going into 2016, says Yi Qiao, sales manager, Asia Pacific, Middle East and Africa. She adds that lifestyle programming remains strong in Asia.

HIGH DRAMA Running alongside the shift to local content on some platforms, Asia's ever-growing appetite for drama has been joined by rising demand for international drama.

Ideas for an English-language drama, co-developed between mainland Chi-

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Happy Birthday!
OUTDOOR CHANNEL
From
contentasia

From page 7

na's China International Television Corporation (CITVC) and Sony Pictures Television (SPT)-backed Left Bank Pictures in the U.K. have been narrowed down to one, said Andrea Wong, SPT's president, international production/Sony Pictures Entertainment international president, during the Celebrating Women in Media in Asia breakfast on 3 December, hosted by HBO Asia and ContentAsia Women.

Benn Watson
GRB Entertainment

Monty Ghai
BBC Worldwide

Gary Pudney
Keshet International

SPT said just ahead of the ATF that the China version of scripted format *Mad About You* would air on the Shanghai Media Group's Dragon TV in January 2016, followed by a release on streaming platform Youku Tudou. This is SPT's first scripted production in China and the first local version of the sitcom in Asia.

BBC Worldwide's SVP/GM, Southeast Asia, Monty Ghai, said the increasing interest for dramas was one of the market's big trends, along with OTT and higher demand from buyers in Southeast Asia. Tentpole BBC shows *Atlantis* and *Musketeers* have already been dubbed in Malay and Thai.

Ghai, who is putting together a BBC-branded OTT offering, said Southeast Asia currently accounted for 10% of the overall revenue out of Asia's TV/video market but was the fastest growing. "We want to boost our production capacity in Southeast Asia, and partnerships are a great strategy," Ghai said.

Keshet International's newly appointed Asia head, Gary Pudney, says India is pushing the creative envelope on drama, moving towards out of the traditional Bollywood comfort zone and towards more Western-influenced drama. "There's more risk taking," he says.

"India seems to be actively and aggressively looking for 'new'," he says, adding: "They are not interested in the shows that are five years old. They want brand new, drama, primetime, tent-pole entertainment shows".

&THEN COMES CHINA China remains a massive force – and, unlike most of India, which remains inward focused – Chinese broadcasters/buyers/everyone is out and about global markets hunting down every opportunity.

"We want China to be a big focus for 2016," says Keshet International's Pudney.

Cake Entertainment's senior sales manager, Marie-Laure Roche, notes more Chinese buyers this year and an increase in mainland platforms wanting to air foreign programming. She says response to *Angry Birds* at ATF had been "overwhelming".

Animals of a different kind are barking loudly for Marvista in Asia. "Dogs are nonjudgemental, everybody loves dogs... dogs resonate," says Marvista Entertainment's Amar, adding that disaster and thriller movies worked well in Asia.

Jodie Mackie, Breakthrough Entertainment's director, sales and acquisitions, also notes the increased presence of Chinese companies on the global stage, as well as rising demand from Korea and Japan for 4K content. At the same time, she says there is more locally made content and that public service broadcasting budgets seem to be shrinking.

KIDS Animation houses and distributors of kids content were out in full force as usual, with multi-screen environments driving acquisitions and optimism. "I've never seen a bigger opportunity across Asia for children's content," says The Jim Henson Company's executive vice president, global distribution, Richard Goldsmith, adding that demand is highest for educational content.

Richard Goldsmith, The Jim Henson Company

"Animation transcends territories," says 9 Story Media Group distribution director, Federico Vargas. 9 Story titles on air in Asia include *Wild Kratts* and *Numb Chucks*.

Animation is at the top of the shopping list for Indonesian free-TV channel, Daai TV, which buys at least three and maybe four animated series a year. Buyer Rini Susanti says the regional spread and choice is one of the ATF's biggest drawcards for her.

Atlantyca Entertainment's Pedro Citaristi says ATF discussions had been good and he hoped to close deals over the next few months for shows such as *Bat Pat* and *Jurassic Cubs*. "The market was good and busier than last year" with buyers from China, India, Indonesia and Korea, he says.

Vicky Zheng, licensing supervisor, overseas business department for Guangdong Alpha Animation and Culture/Guangdong Auldey Animation and Toys, notes higher interest from Indonesia and Malaysia.

First timers at ATF this year leave with similar impressions as others before them.

At ATF for the first time, Splash Entertainment's distribution president, Mevelyn J Noriega, says he found the market smaller and more intimate than Mipcom. The 15-year-old company, formerly known as MoonScoop, is still building its Asia business, but has made headway with pre-school programming in Korea, Singapore and Indonesia, and has sold its first animation feature, *Norm of the North*, in China.

4K And last, but not by any means least, 4K content is a hot topic, whatever the market, and will take an even higher profile in 2016. And that's the best resolution for the New Year. Happy New Year all!

Asia formats boom

Rights holders & distributors say demand is higher and broader across the region

As 2015 draws to a close, format rights owners and distributors say business is booming, although few pretend that there is as much money in the space as they would like. And, while Fox International Channels' leads the regional pack with season four of *Asia's Next Top Model*, there's no word yet on second season renewals of 2015's big-ticket drivers – *Asia's Got Talent* (Sony Pictures Television Networks/AXN) and *MasterChef Asia* (A+E Networks Asia/Lifetime).

"We've seen a doubling of our formats business in Asia over the past few years," says all3media International's chief executive officer, Steve Macallister. all3media titles in Asia include *Gogglebox*, *Are You Normal?* and *Cash Cab*.

"Half our business in Asia is formats," Macallister adds.

Out of Japan, Nippon TV, which is setting up a Singapore-based subsidiary to drive its regional business, is experiencing the same broadening of demand across genres.

"For example, some [buyers at ATF] were seeking the latest animation but still there were some looking for our old titles from years ago. So, we ended up introducing a variation of our titles," says Shigeko (Cindy) Chino, Nippon TV's senior director of international business development.

She says Nippon's experience at the ATF was echoed in formats. "There were some production companies we had never been in touch with from Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand that showed interest in our old formats, including one from 40 years ago," Chino says.

Out of China, JiangSu Broadcasting Corporation's (JSBC) Josh Zhang was on the ATF floor looking for entertainment content, including formats. He marks increased interest out of Southeast Asia and Hong Kong. JSBC has in the past bought format *Who Still Standing?* and sold its original format, *Super Combat Teams,* to Singapore and China. Season two of *Super Combat Teams* premieres in China in 2016.

Gogglebox Korea, all3media

Banijay International's head of global sales, Mike Jackson, says he "met a lot of new people and seen a lot of new avenues for our formats" in Asia during ATF.

Talpa, meanwhile, arrived in Singapore with six versions of *The Voice* on air in Asia this year alone and a goodie bag full of new titles, including *Superkids* and *Lip Sync Masters,* and continuing interest in *I Love My Country*. Dorienke Kraak, Talpa Global's licensing manager, says *I Love My Country* is in 35 markets, including China, and has been picked up in Thailand.

Red Arrow International used the ATF to introduce Asia to shows launched at Mipcom this year. Yi Qiao, Red Arrow International's sales manager for Asia Pacific, Middle East and Africa, says the company is balancing traditional and digital.

"We see digital becoming more and more important in Asia but still a bit slower than Europe, for example, maybe because of bandwidth issues. But it is becoming more and more interesting," she says.

ATF was Keshet International's new Asia-based head Gary Pudney's first outing after the official announcement of his appointment. "This is our coming out, our prom debut," Pudney told *ContentAsia*.

Pudney has opened new conversations with buyers and programmers in Vietnam and India, and carried on existing talks in Indonesia and China. He's not alone.

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Who's who at.... Rewind Networks/Hits marketing retreat at Telunas

Weili Lim, Adrian Lim, StarHub; Pamela Wu, YinQi Lee, Singtel

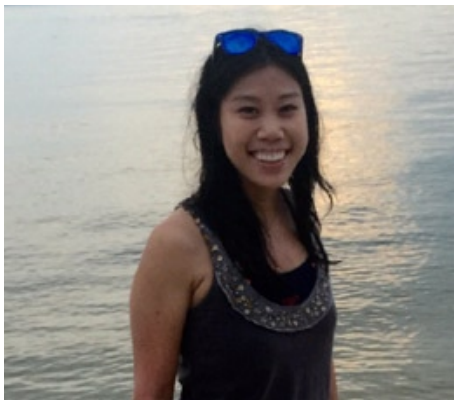
Mark Sukhavanij, Richard Silaraks, CTH Thailand; Avi Himatsinghani, Rewind Networks/Hits

Edwin Raj, Astro Malaysia

Sandie Lee, Rewind Networks/Hits

Charlene Lai, LeTV

Ramadhani, Olivia Lumintang Indovision


Carolyn So, Rewind Networks/Hits

Vivek Couto, MPA; Susan Couto

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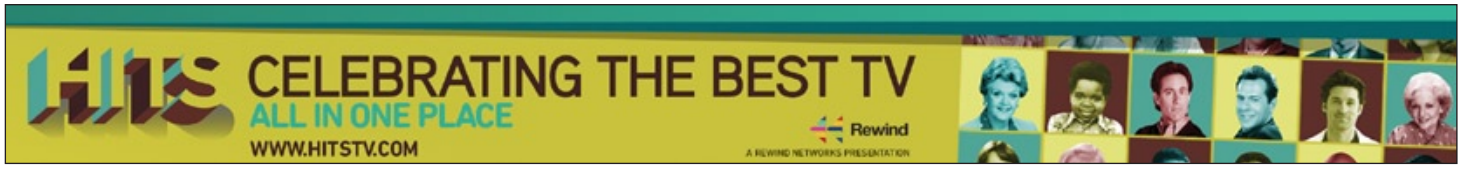

11-year-old wins 1st Da Vinci prize

Next Da Vinci campaign aims for annual encore

Eric Tan, Da Vinci Learning Asia with winner Zaharah Aisha Anwar, first runner up Razan Mawati (left) and second runner up Ammar Adhyaksa Ramadhan (right)

Da Vinci Learning has wrapped its first *Are You The Next Da Vinci?* campaign, crowning 11-year-old Zahrah Aisha Anwar the winner and presenting her with a three-year education bursary.

The campaign, open to kids between six and 12 years old, kicked off at the end of May this year.

Da Vinci says the 15 finalists were chosen from 300,000 entries.

Da Vinci plans to host the contest every year.

MTV Asia puts fans on screen

Video Love goes live on 26 December

MTV premieres original fan-based music show, *Video Love*, on 26 December, putting Southeast Asian "super-fans" on screen with videos from their favourite artists.

The 30-minute episodes will each feature eight music videos – a mix of new releases and established hits – along with commentary and views that fans have submitted online.

Artists included are One Direction, Ariana Grande, Taylor Swift, Lunchmoney Lewis, Justin Bieber, Lady Gaga and Shawn Mendes.

Fans have already been invited to send in their videos.

From page 1: Stingray

to collaborate with more OTT partners", leaving the door open to Netflix, which is currently setting up its Asia team and is expected to start offering services early in the new year.

iflix has licensed content from, among others, MGM, Disney, Warner Bros, Paramount, NBCUniversal, 20th Century Fox, CBS Studios and BBC Worldwide, with first and exclusive rights to titles such as *Mr. Robot*, *Fargo* and *Aquarius*.

iflix launched SVOD services six months ago and offers more than 1,000 titles.

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