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The Picture of Health

New Members
PGA Bulletin

Mentoring Matters
Sad But True Comix
I met Rhoda!

FEATURES

Case Study: Kim Evey & Felicia Day


Celebrating 10 Years in Style
The PGA New Media Council cuts loose at Supperclub.

Produced By Conference 2013

Once Upon a Time… decentralized
How (and where) can transmedia tell your story?

10 (or so) Years at a Glance
Produced by was there for all of it.

The New Convergence
Just when you thought you’d figured out the old one…

Opening Up the Black Box
How gaming consoles are poised to define entertainment.

The Long, Strange, Digital Trip
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Everybody’s Talkin’
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Cover photo: Michael Q. Martin

70 Sad But True Comix
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The Studios At Paramount

THE STUDIOS
PARAMOUNT

Complete Film, TV and Commercial Production Services
Produced by
by Vance Van Petten

We are proud to dedicate this issue in recognition of the 10th anniversary of our New Media Council, but even without that milestone, our Guild would be due for an in-depth exploration of the state of new media producing. Not everyone reads Produced by cover to cover. Nonetheless, this is one issue I recommend you absorb in its entirety. Because after doing so, you’ll have a genuinely coherent sense of where the digital future of our industry is headed.

This is not a modest claim. “Coherent” is not a word that’s typically used in reference to the new media landscape. But I was deeply struck by the juxtaposition of our 2013 new media issue with our first new media issue back in 2007. The first time around, our magazine was a collage of sometimes overlapping but always distinct subjects: broadband video production; digital animation; video games; mobile devices. It was a dazzling array of topics, but it was a mystery how they fit together into anything resembling an “industry” or, even more relevant for our Guild, a career path for producers.

Six years bring a lot of changes. Once again, we have a broad range of feature topics: Web video production; transmedia; games (again); the media convergence. But as these feature articles came back to us, what astonished us wasn’t their diversity, but the way each seemed to be telling a different version of the same story. To our enduring surprise and gratification, they added up to something greater than the sum of their parts.

This wasn’t something we planned or expected. But after so many years of new media being considered “the wild west,” it’s shocking to see a snapshot of the digital face of our industry that, if not crystal clear, at least is no longer blurry. The business models have begun to form. The audience has grown, both in size and sensibility. The technology has advanced, and the first draft of a true digital infrastructure has been established.

And finally, we can begin to see the rough outline for a career path for new media producers. As the stories in this issue reveal, that path isn’t easy, requiring an even broader skill set that absolutely requires producers to develop grass-roots marketing savvy even as they refine their instincts for story and master the intricacies of budget and logistics. But of course, no one ever chose to be a producer because the job was easy. This is the challenge that thousands of our members have been waiting for.

On a Clear Day You Can See the Convergence

The Real Deal!

“As new technologies in the photographic world emerge on what seems like a daily basis, one has to be open to embracing what they may have to offer. Often times the performance does not match the hype and that can be frustrating. I have no interest in being simply the first to use some new technology. However, I am interested in being one of the first embracers of new technology that actually delivers the high expectations. It has been clear to me for years that Clairmont Camera has been doing just that.”

Jim Michaels, PGA, DGA

www.clairmont.com
For the better part of a decade, producers and audiences alike wondered how and when (and even if) the World Wide Web would prove to be a viable platform for storytelling. Would it look like TV? Like a movie, or a game? No one knew.

Kim Evey and Felicia Day will be the first to tell you: They didn’t know, either. So they guessed. Fortunately for everyone, they guessed right.

The result of that guess was The Guild, the first episode of which was posted on YouTube July 27, 2007. A shoestring-budget story about an offbeat group of online video gamers whose dysfunctional personal lives stand in striking contrast to the heroic adventures of their digital alter egos, The Guild evolved from those humble roots into the flagship digital series of its time, gaining a passionate following that sought out the show on Netflix, Xbox Live and on DVD. With the sixth and final season of The Guild wrapping this year, there’s no better time to reflect on the show’s achievements, and on the model it’s created for serial storytelling online.

Prior to their exploits as producers, both Day and Evey were more likely to be found onstage or onscreen. Day had gained a small following from her guest roles on television shows such as Undeclared, Maybe It’s Me and most notably, Joss Whedon’s Buffy the Vampire Slayer, whose avid fans became a key target for The Guild’s marketing outreach. Evey, a veteran of the Main Company at ACME Comedy Theater in Los Angeles, became an early Web pioneer and evangelist after the viral success of her short film Gorgeous Tiny Chicken Machine Show. That expertise proved the ideal counterpart for Day’s sensibilities; while both women served as producers throughout the show’s run, the creative vision behind the show originates with Day, who wrote every episode and serves as the linchpin for the series’ ensemble cast.

This is the 61st in Produced by’s ongoing series of Case Studies of successful producers and their work. Editor Chris Green joined Felicia Day and Kim Evey at Day’s home office in Los Angeles for a frank and lively conversation about the creative demands of online video, changes in the digital space since the premiere of The Guild six years ago, and the dangers of getting very, very, very deeply absorbed in your favorite online role-playing game.
People expect an active connection to you and your show on an ongoing basis. Your Twitter profile can’t go dark. You can’t disappear for months and expect people to have been hanging around. You’re committing to people.

Felicia: That’s what happened to The Guild, as well, for episode three. We were featured on the front page of YouTube, and that really was a big stepping stone for the show because of the power of that platform.

Kim: At the time, there wasn’t really much narrative content on YouTube. Gorgeous Tiny Chicken Machine Show, and we ended up selling it to Sony. So that was my entry and at the time, it was just a way to have fun and do this character that nobody would ever let me do.

Kim Evey: We were both actors, originally. I had created a show with my husband based on a sketch I had written called Gorgeous Tiny Chicken Machine Show, and we ended up selling it to Sony. So that was my entry and at the time, it was just a way to have fun and do this character that nobody would ever let me do.

Kim Evey: We were both actors, originally. I had created a show with my husband based on a sketch I had written called Gorgeous Tiny Chicken Machine Show, and we ended up selling it to Sony. So that was my entry and at the time, it was just a way to have fun and do this character that nobody would ever let me do.

Felicia: There were a couple of others... The Busy and Lonelygirl15, which wasn’t really a narrative in the traditional sense.

It was almost more of a stunt... and I mean that in the best way.

Felicia: Yeah! Exactly. So there were a couple of others, but people didn’t understand what we were doing for years! “Web video? What’s a Web series?” Lots of people still don’t know what it is, but now they think it’s hip so they want to go dark. You can’t disappear for months and expect people to have been hanging around. You’re committing to people.

Felicia: We released the first season, 10 episodes, over a year’s time, and after episode three, we started crowdfunding. We went to a meeting to try to sell the show and someone suggested having the audience pay for it. We were confused by that because we thought, “We’re here for you to give us money!” [both laugh]

Felicia: We took a leap and put a PayPal button on our website and fans started supporting us in a huge way. This was before Kickstarter. We got through the whole first season that way, shooting an episode a month. Seeing what the audience was reacting to allowed us to get excited about the things they got excited about, and then incorporate them in the videos as we moved along.

Kim: And they loved Clara being a really bad mom to her kids, to the point where we actually had them in a cage. And they loved Clara being a really bad mom to her kids, to the point where we actually had them in a cage. And they loved Clara being a really bad mom to her kids, to the point where we actually had them in a cage. And they loved Clara being a really bad mom to her kids, to the point where we actually had them in a cage. And they loved Clara being a really bad mom to her kids, to the point where we actually had them in a cage. And they loved Clara being a really bad mom to her kids, to the point where we actually had them in a cage. And they loved Clara being a really bad mom to her kids, to the point where we actually had them in a cage. And they loved Clara being a really bad mom to her kids, to the point where we actually had them in a cage. And they loved Clara being a really bad mom to her kids, to the point where we actually had them in a cage. And they loved Clara being a really bad mom to her kids, to the point where we actually had them in a cage. And they loved Clara being a really bad mom to her kids, to the point where we actually had them in a cage. And they loved Clara being a really bad mom to her kids, to the point where we actually had them in a cage.
So you were shooting an episode a month. Would you post it out right after you shot it? Or was there a more strategic plan to space things out?

Felicia: It’s interesting. In that day and age, there was less inventory online, so I think the space between episodes allowed people to find it in a way that worked better than just putting everything out there quickly. A lot of people think that you shouldn’t wait that long between, but I think it actually helped the show.

Kim: The anticipation it built was incredible. People were begging, “Where is the next episode?!” They were just really, really excited to see the next one, so it worked to our advantage.

Kim, in terms of becoming a full-time producer, was that a difficult transition?

Kim: I came to L.A. as an actor and then I also started writing so making the decision to focus solely on producing was a big deal. But once I did, I discovered that all of the acting, writing, and directing work I’d done over the years made me a better producer because I understand the creative process from the inside. Now I’m able to exercise my creativity by supporting somebody else’s vision and making sure the project stays on track when the process becomes overwhelming.

Felicia: We had to do everybody’s job at one point or another. As the crews got bigger and bigger, our ability to empathize with a grip’s problem, or a craft service problem, or an actor’s problem became a huge asset because we could understand where they were coming from. We had done their job on some rudimentary level, because we truly started with the bare minimum. As we got more budget, every person on our crews was invested just as much as we were in the show. We were all adding our expertise to each other’s to make the best thing possible on the budget. It was just amazing, amazing to get a group like that together.

In assembling that crew, what was the litmus test for putting together the team?

Kim: Web video is such a down-and-dirty business... I know that in any production, you never have enough money. But with the Web, not only do you not have enough money, you have to make every option you have at your disposal work. You have to be very resourceful. You have to be working with people who thrive on challenge, who can adapt at the drop of a hat and who are willing to go above and beyond because they are excited by the creative process itself.

Felicia: It’s a narrower pool of people to be able to draw upon at those budget levels. You don’t have a lot of options; you just have to make it work. Mostly you base someone’s qualifications on enthusiasm rather than experience. You don’t have the luxury of hiring somebody to fix that later or tomorrow, it has to be done with the resources at hand, or you do it yourself. It’s hard to get out of that mindset, of doing everything ourselves. Kim figured out how to make a DVD from scratch on no money so we could pay back the crew for the first season of shooting. We packaged a thousand DVDs on my kitchen floor by hand. We could have hired some people to help us, but we were just so self-trained to do it ourselves, it didn’t occur to us until later.

So in terms of Microsoft coming on board to fund the series, it’s obviously a major vote of confidence. How did that deal come together?

Felicia: We did Seasons 2–5 with Microsoft and Season 6 was done with YouTube. But we had actually shopped the show all around that summer after Season 1. We had talks with some networks and big producers, but they all wanted the rights to the show. There was a question in our minds as to whether selling the show and all the rights to it for very little money — even though the buyer may have had a great name — was the smart thing to do. Because at the time, nobody else on the Web was really doing better than we were.

Kim: The studios have such a different mindset of how to produce something. Early on, I remember a conversation with one of the potential producing partners, who said, “We could probably give you $30,000 for you to build your website.”
And I thought, “$30,000 to build the website? That’s insane, we could have shot the entire first season with that!” That, for me, was really the big disconnect. They didn’t understand what we were doing, so it didn’t make sense to put ourselves in a position where we might have to make compromises that would ruin what we had worked so hard to build.

Felicia: So we decided to do another season on their own using another PayPal fund. And just as we were about to start shooting for Season 2, Microsoft came in and offered us this amazing deal where they had a sponsor on board, Sprint, to pay for the production costs. And it had this amazing platform to introduce us to millions of new people.

Kim: This was right when Xbox was looking for content.

Felicia: The first wave. For five years, we were one of the only indie-funded shows on Xbox. It was a great deal, and we still retained the rights to the show. And it’s not as if I was a particularly savvy business person, it was just the principle of the thing for me. Because we saw what we could do on our own, we needed to see different kinds of value, as opposed to money or reputation, in order to give up control of the show.

That idea of Web video offering “different kinds of value” for the work you do might get to the heart of what this medium can represent as a career choice. Because we’re talking about a very different model than what’s existed to this point.

Felicia: There are thousands and thousands of people who are making great livings on YouTube right now, doing various small-scale productions, as well as other people doing slightly bigger productions like we do. We’re seeing entertainment fragment more and more. After all, there aren’t going to be more people watching network TV in the future, right? It’s all being diversified in a big way. The metrics might be smaller, but you can make a great living online just doing a cooking show or just a small scripted show or just being a vlogger. Those are legitimate jobs. You can pay your bills and live a great life, what is wrong with that? To this point, Hollywood has been the only beacon to represent success in entertainment, and a lot of people on the traditional side, don’t understand why people might be okay with not being in their club, so to speak. Not to say that it isn’t awesome to work with people who do bigger and very celebrated things. It’s certainly a different world. But now there’s a choice. If you want to succeed in entertainment, there’s an alternative emerging.

Kim: I think the great thing about YouTube is that you’re really getting people’s unfiltered creativity coming through. I think that’s why The Guild was successful as well, because it’s a show that had to go through 10 meetings to decide what a character was going to wear. As cleanly as we could, we tried to execute what Felicia wanted, and what she wrote got onto the screen.

Felicia: And it was not suited to becoming a TV show the way we wanted to do it. I’ve explored that avenue, and it’s just not. It’s been very interesting to me, being from the digital world and going into television meetings where you really do see how the parameters of creativity are so strictly defined that even the creative people have a hard time thinking outside those parameters. You’ll pitch them something very outside-the-box, and they have a million reasons why it’s not even worth pursuing, and they’re all business reasons that have nothing to do with whether it would be cool or not. It’s because person X might not buy this, or person Y only does that, or the demographic is wrong for this channel and they’ll have endless reasons why they don’t want to make something.

What was the moment when you realized, “This is not a TV show. This is not a stepping stone to a different platform. The Guild is a Web series, period”? Felicia: The minute I saw comments, I think that was it. The fact that I made something with people I really love and seeing individual people react to it in real time is so much more fulfilling than knowing that you got however many thousands of viewers that make up an extra half-point in the Nielsen ratings. When we started getting those comments, we got excited about making the next one, no matter what. We didn’t have to wait for anybody. We could’ve just kept saving up and shooting, and that freedom was kind of amazing.

Kim: The audience was crazy for the show. When we started going to conventions, that was when I realized, “Oh my God. This is real. People are dressing as the cast! People are sending fan art.”

Felicia: It really makes a difference. Aside from awards and innovation and all that, people have met their sponsors through the show. People have made their own Web series because of the show. And that’s more important to me than anything, knowing that it impacts people’s lives.

So what’s changed about producing for the Web since that time? It’s weird to say, but 2007 feels like a long time ago.

Kim: Right now, there’s a whole second wave of studio and “Hollywood” coming in. I like to think that something like The Guild could still happen today, but... when the studios come in, they want things that advertisers can understand and advertisers understand celebrity.

Felicia: The focus today is on what people are going to short-term click on, rather than providing the infrastructure for more long-lasting narratives or shows. I think that’s where everything is teetering a little bit. People are expecting much lower budgets than even we were dealing with a couple of years ago, which is very surprising. It’s gone backward a lot. The expectation is that you make stuff for less, and that you have to have a celebrity involved. I mean, there are plenty of people making fantastic things now; I’m not casting aspersions on anyone. But chasing numbers often just leads to short-term entertainment. The Guild never got 10 million views per episode. But it became a cultural phenomenon and became the first Web series on Netflix and was sold on DVDs in stores after being shot in our garages... those are things that have long-term value and those are the things that I think are getting a little lost in the shuffle.

Kim: If you’re an advertiser, you’ll be looking at YouTube and see “Oh, here’s a guy who’s vlogging in his apartment. He gets a million hits every time there’s a new video, so that’s what I want to invest in.” Like Felicia said, they’re not thinking long-term. They’re not thinking about a property that’s going to create a loyal audience who will come back again and again, and trust you to be a tastemaker, and invest in your DVDs or stand in line to see you at Comic-Con or contribute their own money because they care about your show. I think when you get to the executive level, that doesn’t even enter into it. They’re not aware of how personal the interaction is.

Felicia: They’re still thinking in the terms of success in the traditional manner, which is ratings. But really, online is about audience, and the audience’s passion. The audience is looking for things that they can’t find elsewhere; that’s why they’re online in the first place. I think it’s about being brave, and investing in things that break the rules, and knowing that you’re targeting a specific audience that you can reach online better than with traditional media. That’s where the next wave of success will happen.

I think a lot of would-be Web producers are daunted by that prospect, of having to search out the audience online. How did you guys manage? Felicia: Well, it was six years ago, and the landscape was completely different. But Felicia spent something like 48 hours sitting at her computer and going to websites and forums that were either fans of Joss Whedon, because she had been on Buffy the Vampire Slayer, or World of Warcraft forums and just typing, “Hi, I’m Felicia and I did a show you might like!” But it worked because it was true and so genuine.

Felicia: It was literally grassroots work, going to every blog entry about the show and thanking them for watching. And it was literally grass-roots work, going to every blog and leaving an entry about the show and thanking them for watching. And it was literally grass-roots work, going to every blog and leaving an entry about the show and thanking them for watching. And it was literally grass-roots work, going to every blog and leaving an entry about the show and thanking them for watching. And it was literally grass-roots work, going to every blog and leaving an entry about the show and thanking them for watching.

Day and Evey (back; right of center) with (from left to right, back row) gaffer Jeremy Kerr, director of photography Dallas Bloom, director/production designer Greg Aronowitz, 1st AD Tory Mell and (left to right; front) actors Sam Cohen and Sophie Reichl on the set of The Guild Sells Out Christmas Special.

Felicia: The focus today is on what people are going to short-term click on, rather than providing the infrastructure for more long-lasting narratives or shows. I think that’s where everything is teetering a little bit. People are expecting much lower budgets than even we were dealing with a couple of years ago, which is very surprising. It’s gone backward a lot. The expectation is that you make stuff for less, and that you have to have a celebrity involved. I mean, there are plenty of people making fantastic things now; I’m not casting aspersions on anyone. But chasing numbers often just leads to short-term entertainment. The Guild never got 10 million views per episode. But it became a cultural phenomenon and became the first Web series on Netflix and was sold on DVDs in stores after being shot in our garages... those are things that have long-term value and those are the things that I think are getting a little lost in the shuffle.
did my homework to know that all those blogs seem to like things that are of this ilk, so, “If you can give me five minutes, please look at it! And if you don’t, it’s cool.” That was the approach. Very polite. Today, it’s a bit harder to reach an audience, but it’s not any producer’s fault. It’s the fault of the platforms themselves for not curating, not narrowing it down, not allowing the audience member to really connect with a producer or creator or personality in a way that’s valuable for both of them. They haven’t scaled to accommodate a much larger audience, but I definitely think that will be the next wave in platform evolution.

It seems worth noting that you’re both women producing this content. The Guild has great roles for actresses, and those characters drive the stories probably more than the men do. And yet you’re operating in a pair of worlds — entertainment and technology — that are often perceived to be boys’ clubs. To what degree has that been an obstacle for you?

**Felicia:** It’s funny, I’ve had such little exposure to the business side of Hollywood until the last couple of months. There are lines drawn in the traditional world, and those lines are very firmly drawn for creators, for business people, for everything. The cool thing about working on the Web is that we work closely with tech people, and I’ve found that tech people are actually very flexible in terms of working with us as creators, regardless of gender. When we had an idea for marketing or going to a convention or making a cool piece of content, they would embrace it. It didn’t matter that we were women, because we were bringing new ideas that used their platforms in innovative ways. I don’t mean to be naïve about it, but I’ve encountered way more prejudice in terms of an institutionalized dichotomy between men and women in my experience with Hollywood. I fear that regardless of gender, this big shift of Hollywood to digital will define this new space in a traditional way that comes to restrict what people have been able to do. I would love it if that doesn’t happen. So many interesting voices work outside of that system, and they shouldn’t be silenced because they don’t fit the mainstream entertainment mold. They should be looked at as opportunities to work with new forms of content.

So, for the last season, what led to the shift from Microsoft to YouTube as the primary sponsor of the show?

**Felicia:** Well, Microsoft decided to stop doing that kind of content, and there was an opportunity to create a new YouTube channel that we called “Geek and Sundry.” We brought in another producer, Sheri Bryant, to help us with this new venture. I felt like there was one last story to tell within the world of The Guild as a Web series.

**Kim:** It was interesting... definitely a different place to come back to five years later. It was us learning, again, that you can never take your audience for granted and you can never take your platform for granted.

**Felicia:** You have to think about your audience and how they want to consume content. Instinctively on YouTube, people don’t seem to want to consume more than one show on a channel. They consider “channels” to be shows or people so it’s an educational process to change how they perceive something like “Geek and Sundry,” but one that I think will pay off in the long-run. It certainly creates an umbrella where we can create really cool things like TableTop or Written by a Kid or any of those great shows that I think could have anchored their own channels individually in the past. Maybe each show would have been more successful on its own, but we’re investing in the long-term. So who knows?

**Kim:** The architecture of YouTube is difficult for multi-show channels because asking somebody to subscribe if they like one of the offerings on your channel is in effect, the equivalent of setting your DVR to record *Mad Men*, but then having it record the entire AMC schedule. You have to dig through that later to find the things you want. It’s difficult. But the way smart TVs are evolving, it could all change overnight.

**Kim:** The cast of *The Guild* prepares for the “Do You Want to Date My Avatar?” video shoot. From left: Simon Kemplar (obscured), Jeff Lewis, Sandeep Parikh, Felicia Day, Robin Thorsen, Amy Okuda (both obscured).
There are still a lot of people trying to figure out what a Web channel is… and it sounds like that extends to the Web developers and tech guys themselves.

Kim: There’s definitely a lot of experimentation going on right now in an effort to standardize and legitimize Web content. The native advantage of online video, especially the YouTube platform, is the potential for a relationship with the audience. You can really cultivate your show, and get people excited about it because they have a connection to you. But if you’re not a content creator using the tools every day, it’s impossible to understand the nuance of that relationship because it’s very fluid and very personal. And at the end of the day, developers aren’t necessarily concerned with that relationship, at least not in the same way creators are.

Felicia: You’re either investing in your infrastructure, or you’re investing in your content. It’s two different worlds, and you can’t do both at the same time. That really is the biggest key that I’ve learned. I don’t know how you do both of those well, especially on the budgets they expect. And long term, who knows? Both models could collapse.

We’ve seen that happen before in the online world. It might all disappear tomorrow. I was at Myspace’s office this morning for an interview with IGN for The Guild book. And I remember when Myspace was huge, and now, it’s a shell of what it was.

That’s sort of a grim note to be winding down on, so I’d like to close by asking you both, for producers looking to create content in the digital space, or crossing over from film or TV, what should be in the front of their minds? What should their priorities be?

Kim: It’s definitely an exciting time. My husband and I were talking about the fact that we came from sketch comedy. Three years before we started online, we would have been talking about the fact that we came from sketch comedy. Three years before we started online, we would have been thinking, “Okay, now we have to try to get an audition for Saturday Night Live or Mad TV.” And that would have been it. That was the end point. But being part of a time where technology allows you to take your creativity, whatever it is, and put it out into the world and find your own audience… that’s amazing.

Felicia: From now on, everybody will come from the Web. That’s where talent will be. So there’s no excuse not to be there.

Wyoming is one of America’s gems. And the camera loves it. It’s home to wide-open spaces with green, as far as the eye can see, snow-covered mountains, and an abundance of wildlife. Many successful productions have found inspiration here, including Academy Award-winning Django Unchained and ABC’s Modern Family. And if inspiration isn’t incentive enough, how does 15% sound? Visit www.filmwyoming.com to find out how.
On June 7, 2013, the PGA held the 10-year anniversary of the New Media Council (NMC) gala at the Supperclub in Hollywood, recognizing a landmark achievement by the PGA to provide support, accreditation, and a home for digital producers since 2003.

In that time, the Council has grown to more than 800 members in Los Angeles, New York, Washington, D.C. and San Francisco among other emerging territories. With the disruption of traditional film and television models, this growing base of new media producers has stepped up to the plate, buoyed by the support of their colleagues in traditional media and that of the Producers Guild, which has become a safe harbor in a sea of change.

Departing NMC Board Chair Chris Thomes, along with several members of the NMC Board, including Jeanette DePatie, Dina Benadon, founding Chair Marc Levey, and a host of other volunteers helped bring the event to life. “We wanted a venue that spoke to the merging of traditional and new media,” said Thomes. “Supperclub offered this amazing new, high-tech space for the main party and a smaller, more intimate and more traditional venue in the adjoining Writer’s Room Bar. Marc knew the people who ran the venue and thanks to him and their support, we found the perfect place.” In contrast to Supperclub’s sleek and futuristic space, the tucked-away Writer’s Room re-created the writer hangouts of classic-era Hollywood and a perfect contrast for the event. Complete with a secret entrance off a back alley

Los Angeles • New York • San Francisco • Washington D.C.
behind Musso & Frank’s, event attendees felt immersed in both old and new Hollywood as they moved from one space to the next.

The event began with the Grace Kelly Band livening Supperclub with jazz classics and modern riffs. Accenting the kickoff were PGA partner liquor sponsors showcasing some of their finest spirits and champagnes. Appetizers whizzed by on platters and large, stylized seating in the main room created an intimate and unforgettable first impression.

As the NMC members congregated, prior Board members, including PGA NMC East founding Chair Mark Scarpa and all prior NMC Board chairs, including founder Marc Levey, and Chairs Brian Seth Hurst, Michael Palmieri, Alison Savitch and Chris Thomas, gathered in the Writer’s Room for an intimate and reflective summit meeting. Chairs were honored with speeches and thanks, punctuated by heartfelt toasts to both where the NMC has been and where it is going.

The evening lost no momentum as the Board members rejoined the main room for a screening of a new sizzle video reflecting on the Council’s accomplishments and its vision for the future. Produced by PGA members Dina Benadon, Brandon Grande and Jay Williams, the piece was produced in traditional PGA fashion — high-quality production values made possible by volunteer sweat and time.

As the venue kicked into high gear, aerial dancers dropped from the ceiling, amazing onlookers with the spectacle that the Supperclub is known for, and confirming the New Media Council’s reputation for cool and offbeat events.

Included in that unique approach was the custom PGA photo booth where partyers could snap a personal photo strip emblazoned with the NMC 10-year anniversary logo. And just when one thought the evening had hit its stride, the club shifted into overdrive with Supperclub DJs and a dance floor extravaganza that electrified the night.

“It was important to celebrate this 10-year mark in a big way,” said Thomes. “We wanted to let the general NMC members know they are special and critical to the continued growth of the Guild. Ten years is an amazing landmark and we needed to embrace it as we looked back at where the Council had come from and looked forward to where the Council, the Guild, and entertainment in general, is going.”

1. NMC member Stu Levy (left of center) with guests, from left to right: Walea Constantinau (Film Commissioner, Honolulu Film Office), Urvi Bhandari (AT&T) and Camille Zanette (Champagne Devaux).
2. Founding Board member Shawn Gold with Marc Scarpa.
3. Founding Board members Jay Malla and Nicholas de Wolff.
4. Founding Chair Marc Levey (right) with guests, from left to right: Alexa Reeves and Marcy Gonzales.
5. Brent Young and a sponsor share a laugh.
6. Ten years of NMC Chairs, from left to right: Chris Thomas, Brian Seth Hurst, Alison Savitch, Marc Levey, Michael Palmieri.
The PGA presented its 5th annual Produced By Conference (PBC) over the weekend of June 8 and 9, and the 2013 edition, hosted by 20th Century Fox, and continued to build on its past success, leaving no doubt this is now the most important and influential industry-wide event for producers, with more than 30 panels and roundtables, 100 speakers and 1,000 attendees.

It is also a great opportunity for PGA members to network and meet other members in a social setting. The alfresco lunches on the Fox lot are particularly effective at encouraging this.

Having attended four out of the five PBCs, I have always left the Conference feeling energized, inspired and exhausted (and sometimes inebriated). And as much as the Conference regularly hints at the imminent demise of one or another aspect of the business, it also reminds us that for every door that closes, a dozen windows open. This is particularly true in the technology panels, of which there were several, where new types of content and new delivery methods were discussed and debated.

This year’s PBC also introduced a new format called 360 Profile, taking a comprehensive, holistic approach to the discussion of a game-changing project or industry development, with panelists across a wide spectrum of production. The inaugural panels included profiles of AMC’s The Walking Dead, the video game Payday, and the expanding world of crossover talent.

And the popular “Conversation with” series continues to attract the industry’s most successful producers, with 2013’s participants including Jerry Bruckheimer, J.J. Abrams and Mark Burnett.

Attendees could also take advantage of small-group mentoring roundtables, with representatives from all forms of media, including motion pictures, television and digital videos. In the spirit of truth in advertising, these PBC sessions were, in fact, conducted at roundtables.
Notes From the iPad

Saturday, June 8

9:00 a.m.: Where’s breakfast? The reduced (from prior years) options of granola, coffee and protein bars are the first sign of the times that PBC has outgrown its humble roots.

9:30 a.m.: All the World’s a Stage — a panel about transmedia. My iPad keeps trying to change the spelling of transmedia so I just type TM (with apologies to Transcendental Meditation and Tracy Morgan). The panel includes the multi-talented Rob Grice (co-writer of the new Star Trek franchise) and Kiki Wolfkill (Halo), but the real star is Samantha Thomas (Marvel), who is so inhumanly articulate that I keep looking for a teleprompter. The panel is split in terms of creating transmedia content as a thing unto itself, or as an expanded universe that ultimately services a franchise (the “mama’shers,” as one panelist suggests). The panel does agree, however, that Google Glass represents a game-changing opportunity for content creators (at which point everyone in the audience over 30 quickly Googles “Google Glass”).

10:45 a.m.: Hit the Ground Showrunning with the showrunners of Sons of Anarchy, Parenthood, The Big C and House of Cards. It’s always great to hear from Kurt Sutter because he is so unapologetically outside the mainstream of successful TV writer-producers, and Darlene Hunt is hilarious (she comes from standup comedy). But Beau Willimon steals the show here as the developer of the landmark Netflix series House of Cards. Moderator Marshall Herskovitz is quick to add his ironic commentary about how HOC breaks all the rules and eschews all the conventional wisdom of television, while still garnering a huge critical and popular acclaim (and post-PBC becoming the first digital series to be nominated for an Emmy as Best Drama Series).

12:15 p.m.: Stopped at the Alaska Film Commission booth to network with a beautiful American bald eagle.

12:30 p.m.: Lunch on New York Street. Creatively, I would have liked to see vendors serving the hot dogs out of carts, and some New York pizza slices would have been welcome (if any could be found in Los Angeles), but the company is excellent and many business cards are exchanged around my table.

2:00 p.m.: 360 Profile: ‘The Walking Dead’ with executive producers Gale Anne Hurd and David Alpert, as well as AMC’s Marc Wiseman and Fox International’s Sharon Tal Yguado. As a fan, I humbly acknowledge my lack of objectivity reporting on this panel. The litmus test for a real fan is whether he/she can actually be excited to hear from a business affairs executive at the network. So yes, I am now following Marc Wiseman on Twitter and I added her picture next to Lauren Cohan’s in my iPhone TWD album. One of the most interesting parts of the panel was the discussion of how TWD debuts worldwide within a week following its North American broadcast, and the logistics to make that happen (including translation and dubbing in 32 languages). I am apparently in good company as season three of TWD became the first cable series to win the season in the 18–49 demographic across all networks including broadcast. This was also a sobering reminder that four years from now, my opinion will no longer be relevant.

3:45 p.m.: Conversation with J.J. Abrams. Facts about J.J. Abrams: He shoots film; he is a graduate of football powerhouse Sarah Lawrence College; Bad Robot has a matching gift program for employee philanthropy; he is often in the editing room cursing the director — that director being himself; the most important thing to him is family; and he will never open the Magic Mystery Box. Advice from J.J. Abrams (via his dad): Don’t go learn how to make films. Go learn what to make films about. In short, the panel was pure geek heaven... for those attendees (not me of course... cough, cough?) who are geeks.

5:30 p.m.: PGA General Membership Meeting and Conference Mixer. I blame the open wine bar for my lack of coherent memories of these events. A number of PGA members were acknowledged for their significant contributions to the Guild; various committee reports presented the scope and success of the PGA’s programs and services; some lucky people (but unfortunately not me) won airline tickets and Surface tablet computers (courtesy of sponsors Delta Air Lines and Microsoft). That first glass of wine (Keever Vineyards) was awfully good.

Sunday, June 9

9:30 a.m.: Developing and Packaging Films in the Brave New World — a thoroughly entertaining panel about the various and emerging ways that content is created and distributed. The days of foreign pre-sales are over. The YouTube filmmakers of today are the studio filmmakers of tomorrow. Learn what the audience wants; different cultures can inform content and create opportunities. New media has broken the distribution barrier. The theatrical experience is still important overseas. I am convinced that [2 Guus director] Baltasar Kormákur, who had all the best one-liners, would be a fantastic dinner party guest.

10:45 a.m.: Every Number Tells a Story — a panel where research was surprisingly shown to be helpful but not infallible. Research is the beginning of the conversation, not the end of the conversation. TV is so good now that mediocre films actually look bad by comparison. New media means the gatekeepers are no longer as powerful. Filming locations are very important and can be the difference between a green-light and a pass. Research tends to favor more information in the trailer, but common sense has to prevail — except that it rarely does.

12:15 p.m.: Contrary to everything I was taught about not having dessert first, I stop by the Delta Air Lines booth on the way to lunch for an ice cream cookie sandwich.
12:30 p.m.: Lunch on New York Street, where shade is a precious commodity. I meet a member of the press and his lovely daughter, and we talk about The Purge and the way movies used to set the political agenda instead of react to it, or disengage from it altogether.

1:30 p.m.: Mentoring Roundtable with Andrew Jameson. Like many producers, Andrew started his career as a lawyer. His recent work has been with music artists making forays into television, including Cee Lo Green and Curtis “50 Cent” Jackson. He says a lot of networking is connecting the dots to the people you want to meet. One of the roundtable participants, who retired from the technology sector and recently graduated from film school at an unusually advanced age, asks the ubiquitous question of how to secure financing for an independent film. With cautious optimism, everyone leans in anxiously to hear the dispositive answer.

3:45 p.m.: A Conversation with Jerry Bruckheimer. One of the most successful producers of all time, Jerry Bruckheimer closes the 2013 Produced By Conference with a recap of his legendary career; acknowledgements of the creative artists who inspired and mentored him over the years, and a preview of things to come. Moderated by Pete Hammond (Deadline), the session may be light on revelations, but there is abundant inspiration, and some insight into a producer who truly understands and respects the industry and his craft. “I’m going to fail today — today is a good day to fail.” Tenacity, he says, is what keeps you in the game.

4:00 p.m.: A Conversation with J.J. Abrams. “This is the only industry where the most creative people are actually the accountants.” (David J. Robinson/ Are You Getting Your Fair Share? Understanding Producer Share Participations)

4:15 p.m.: Profile: The Walking Dead. 12:30 p.m.: Lunch on New York Street, where shade is a precious commodity. I meet a member of the press and his lovely daughter, and we talk about The Purge and the way movies used to set the political agenda instead of react to it, or disengage from it altogether.

4:30 p.m.: The Walking Dead is the first U.S. series to debut each episode worldwide within the same week of the initial U.S. broadcast. There is a translation team at an undisclosed location that translates the locked picture into 32 languages so that dubbing can occur in 10 days — instead of the customary 60. (Sharon Tal Yguado/360 Profile: The Walking Dead)

5:00 p.m.: TV is your child. A movie theater is your parent.” (J.J. Abrams/ A Conversation with J.J. Abrams)

5:15 p.m.: Alaska is home to 50% of the American bald eagles in the world. (Alaska Film Commission Booth)

5:30 p.m.: Delta Air Lines has access to great ice cream cookie sandwiches and impressive-looking fully reclining airline seats. (Delta Air Lines booth)

6:00 p.m.: Delta Air Lines has access to great ice cream cookie sandwiches and impressive-looking fully reclining airline seats. (Delta Air Lines booth)

6:15 p.m.: “’The Tourist’ should have been a hit. What happened? He [Johnny Depp] looked like a girl and she [Angelina Jolie] looked like a boy.” (Lynda Obst/Every Number Tells a Story)

6:30 p.m.: “’The Tourist’ should have been a hit. What happened? He [Johnny Depp] looked like a girl and she [Angelina Jolie] looked like a boy.” (Lynda Obst/Every Number Tells a Story)

7:00 p.m.: “The research term ’definite interest’ has no meaning. You go to Best Buy and you have ’definite interest’ in buying everything in the store.” (Vincent Bruszewski/ Every Number Tells a Story)

7:15 p.m.: “’The Tourist’ should have been a hit. What happened? He [Johnny Depp] looked like a girl and she [Angelina Jolie] looked like a boy.” (Lynda Obst/Every Number Tells a Story)

7:30 p.m.: “’The Tourist’ should have been a hit. What happened? He [Johnny Depp] looked like a girl and she [Angelina Jolie] looked like a boy.” (Lynda Obst/Every Number Tells a Story)

8:00 p.m.: “’The Tourist’ should have been a hit. What happened? He [Johnny Depp] looked like a girl and she [Angelina Jolie] looked like a boy.” (Lynda Obst/Every Number Tells a Story)

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10:30 p.m.: “’The Tourist’ should have been a hit. What happened? He [Johnny Depp] looked like a girl and she [Angelina Jolie] looked like a boy.” (Lynda Obst/Every Number Tells a Story)

11:00 p.m.: “’The Tourist’ should have been a hit. What happened? He [Johnny Depp] looked like a girl and she [Angelina Jolie] looked like a boy.” (Lynda Obst/Every Number Tells a Story)
Once Upon a Time...
decentralized

There has been a lot of debate and head-scratching around what exactly transmedia is. But the fact is, while you can call it whatever you want, at its core, it describes a migration and evolution of mass-media storytelling from a single screen to, well, just about everywhere. According to Henry Jenkins, author of the seminal book Convergence Culture: Where Mass Media Collide with New Media, transmedia is the process by which an intellectual property is manifested across multiple platforms by multiple producers. It’s not simply redistribution of a preliminary type of media (say, an episode of Cheers) across the Internet (say, via Hulu or YouTube). Rather, it’s the practice of telling a story from various points of view, at different times, in different formats, the sum total of which comprises a world and its characters. New media formats, platforms and distribution methods are now allowing a story to be bigger, have more touch points with an audience and across longer periods of time, as well as generate more revenue.

Compelling Characters, a Great Story... and a Calendar!

Great characters and stories transcend platforms, distribution windows and media formats. In fact, some of the most effective strategies leverage multiple approaches. Straight video, such as YouTube-style content, is only one tool by which a producer can tell her tale. What are some of the other tools? There are a lot, and the list is ever-growing, but it includes social media platforms like Facebook and Vine, multi-channel networks like FullScreen and Machinima, video-on-demand services like Hulu and Amazon Prime, and even immersive experiences like augmented reality, role-play systems like LARPs (Live Action Role-Playing games) and special venue and dome-based video projection environments. The bottom line: Any platform that can reach an audience can be an effective part of a transmedia story.

But planning is everything.

Jill Atkinson, an activist/writer/blogger who advocates for social responsibility in business, proposes that there are eight defining characteristics of a transmedia production. One of them requires that “Cross-media rollout is planned early in the life of the franchise.” Few do this better than the Walt Disney Company. They have been managing franchises for half a century and whether it’s a ride at Disneyland, a DVD, a concert showcasing a TV show’s soundtrack, or a virtual world fleshing out and extending an IP’s narrative space, they plan everything out before triggering a story across multiple outlets.

While one can use a multitude of game development and interactive storytelling organizational tools to manage a cross-platform effort, it really all starts with a simple calendar. At Disney, they use a franchise calendar — the most basic tool in the world, but what it does so elegantly is map story elements and components to key business-driving events. From scripts and pilots, to airings and screenings, to events like Comic-Con, no stone is left unturned, and every department knows when they are up to bat.

So who orchestrates this whole enchilada? Most transmedia experts agree that a single vision must drive the story world and must be managed by one or a very few visionaries. This is the “creator,” who might be an EP, a showrunner, a writer, a producer or director, etc. This is the person or small group of people who own the vision and are accountable for the world. From there, others coordinate, plan, and produce efforts accordingly and map deployments to business events that drive revenue and scale as necessary through product distribution.

Everyone Is Everywhere, So Be There Too

This type of advanced planning can be seen in full effect with The Lizzie Bennet Diaries, a Web series adaptation of Pride and Prejudice. Lizzie Bennet utilized five different YouTube channels, two dozen in-story character Twitter accounts, and story events happening on a dozen other social platforms. It was quite a phenomenon, garnering more viewers than some network shows and doing so using multiple media, channels, platforms and other vehicles.

Unlike franchises like Star Wars or The Matrix, which feature multiple individual story elements spread across films, comic books, video games, etc., all playing out in a common story world, Lizzie takes a more integrated approach. Her single story is told over multiple types of media, but those elements do not stand alone and are interdependent on one another to reveal the true nature of the story. One piece of the story might be a YouTube video, another piece may be on a website and another piece may be hidden in a magazine...
advertisement. It’s a technique that relies on the audience to put all the pieces together to assemble the story, mimicking the way audiences consume information in our daily life — though email and social media, the radio and TV: everything everywhere.

And all that takes some serious planning. Jay Bushman, transmedia producer at Fourth Wall Studios and Lizzie Bennet Diaries, has stated in his discussion with Marama Whyte at Hypable, “Everything starts in the writer’s room. We break the stories for each arc, and decide what belongs on camera and what doesn’t. For major story beats, I’ll look at what ends up in the episodes and try to find ways that transmedia can complement the action, show viewers what’s going on from a different perspective of characters who aren’t on camera at that point, or ways to bridge episodes together.”

So while the core of Lizzie was video supported on multiple platforms, not every transmedia production relies on video, or frankly, even includes it at all.

20 Frames Are Worth a Thousand Words

Another example of non-traditional transmedia storytelling is the creative marketing around Fox Searchlight’s The Way, Way Back. A compelling faux GIF experience was launched on digg/Tumblr. A GIF (image format) is simply a sequence of repeating video frames that automatically play in a Web browser. This has proven to be an easily sharable means of revealing character and story using a trending approach without full video production. Although, in the Fox example cited, content was drawn from the movie, one could conceive of unique and specific moments even before a movie or TV was made, or long after it screened or aired. This content could be “shot” and released virally over social media on sites like Tumblr, and serve as an alternate way to expose storylines, showcase a character’s traits, or simply tease moments/content to come. They are bite-size, viral, and powerful.

And while 20 frames in a GIF is one of the shortest amounts of time in which to tell a story, the resuscitation of an IP by companies like Netflix adds a whole new meaning to transmedia.

Timelessness — Life Beyond Cancellation

With distributors like Netflix now making a claim in the content development space, properties like Arrested Development, once doomed for standard TV season life, are now getting second chances and transcending typical content distribution timelines. Not only do Netflix and Hulu represent another platform from traditional cable TV, but the binge rollout of all episodes, and the creative, multiphase marketing on Twitter and Facebook, combined with the noise on a multitude of fans sites, created a true transmedia fabric that got everyone’s attention. The approach transcends what people typically expect of content rollouts. Shows can now come back between cancellations on different networks, be formatted for binge viewing and even point toward feature films, short-form Web series, whatever one can imagine. People want the characters they love and the more of it they get, the better.

Breaking the Fourth Wall with No ROI

Fourth Wall Studios really pushed the envelope transmedia experience with their RIDES platform. In fact, they won an Emmy® for Dirty Work, one of their transmedia productions. Their “RIDES” are narrative, multi-screen entertainment experiences that allow players to discover an unfolding story delivered via browser, email, cell phone and other connected devices. Compelling, yes, but monetizable? Maybe. It’s still very early in the stages of transmedia, especially in areas where the innovation is expected to return a profit and not merely serve as creative marketing for another media type. Fourth Wall Studios quickly laid off dozens of workers right after winning their Emmy, proof that even award-worthy material can sometimes wind up a loss leader. Until there is scale behind something, the revenue numbers just won’t add up.
To that point, many buzz-worthy transmedia efforts have manifested as movie, TV or video game marketing projects.

**A Game of Senses Through Unclear Waters**

Transmedia can mean so many things to different people that the lines begin to blur between pure “story producing” and clever and creative marketing. While we’d never argue that marketing can’t entertain, when it comes to protecting the PGA transmedia credit and the producers who work hard to earn it, certain lines have to be drawn. Instated as a new media credit four years ago, the title of “transmedia producer” planted a flag in ground that’s still shifting under our feet. As a result, the definition continually must be revisited, sometimes annually, as digital disruption alters the entertainment landscape and what the PGA acknowledges as an officially recognized producing credit.

Commonly, transmedia campaigns are funded by marketing dollars, and developed in support of marketing another form of media, such as a motion picture or television show. And while overseeing a marketing campaign isn’t going to qualify anyone for PGA membership, the techniques used by such campaigns are worth studying for the depth that they might one day add to original storytelling. A compelling analogy might be the rapid stylistic evolution of music videos in the 1980s and early ’90s, while no one would mistake a three-minute video for a feature film, a careful and clear-eyed look at the format and its techniques would have told you a great deal about where feature film and television were headed over the coming decades.

It was, in fact, inventive transmedia marketing that supported the launch of one of the most successful and spectacular shows on television — HBO’s Game of Thrones. To help with awareness during the launch, transmedia agency Campfire needed to create a marketing campaign that would be rich enough to satisfy fans of the well-regarded book series but simple enough to enjoy without any knowledge of the story. So they created a campaign that spoke to different audiences on different levels, generating a groundswell of initial support for the series. They brought the world of Westeros to life through a series of interactive experiences based around the five senses, even sending physical props and materials to influencers, who then shared their experience with their fans and followers.

The question of whether this kind of content represents creative marketing or Guild membership-level “story entertainment” is a complex one. Producers who claim such productions on their resumes when applying for Guild membership are closely scrutinized, with their role as “producer” carefully vetted. The PGA isn’t about to open its ranks to marketing executives who simply green-light the funds for such a campaign. But truly producing the story component of the content is what distinguishes PGA eligibility and credibility as a transmedia producer.

**Protecting PGA Credibility**

Transmedia experiences strive to transcend the way audiences consume story. From the senses, to metaphorical objects in the physical world, to new formats and radically time-shifted viewing windows, transmedia has radically refactored storytelling. Experiential and authentic, these new approaches are getting audiences’ attention, motivating their discussions and influencing their lives like never before.

That said, the challenge before our Guild is to work to differentiate marketing efforts from pure transmedia storytelling. As the newest guests at the entertainment industry party, new media producers have a unique respect for the credibility that comes with Producer Guild membership. By maintaining clarity around those guidelines, we strive to maintain the integrity of the Guild, its constitutional guidelines, and the distinction of its membership. This is in no way to diminish the incredible transmedia work done on behalf of brands. But the essential question is whether or not the resulting content is storytelling in and of itself? Or is it simply promoting a brand and is not itself the story?

As time passes and disruption continues to blend media types, forge new platforms and new ways of telling stories, the job of vetting the credit and new members in this space isn’t going to get any easier. Nonetheless, the New Media Council will continue to refine its credit definitions to keep up with the times and appropriately represent members of the producing team. In the final analysis, the PGA is there to serve the storytellers and the creators of intellectual property. But the nature of those pursuits — like the world of entertainment itself — is changing like never before.
“By 2012, interactive TV programming should be widely available. People will use a wide variety of devices to interact with shows, including set-top boxes, satellite receivers, smart TVs, Web tablets and wireless devices... Even high-definition television (HDTV) could be widespread by 2012.”
Steven Hoffman & Bill Niemeyer, Produced by, Summer 2002

“With each new medium, like radio, movies or television, it has taken years for storytelling to take full advantage of the medium. And then when it does, suddenly, it feels as if it’s always been that way. Is it time for Storytelling 2.0?

Is it time for 360 stories?”
Susan Lambert foresees transmedia, Produced by, Spring 2006

“Over the next few years, it’s likely that the number of producers with game credits will rise from fewer than 5% to more than 20%, or even 50%. Increasingly, winning the ‘producing game’ will involve maximizing opportunities within the gaming industry.”
Alex Lightman, Produced by, Summer 2004

“Properties and characters no longer need to be introduced exclusively via the television or feature film screen. Video games have already proven their worth as powerhouse creative outlets, and the Internet and mobile arenas are realms worthy of serious consideration.”
Nicholas de Wolff, Produced by, Spring 2005

“Next, people are going to be cutting, pasting and sharing TV experiences.”
Shawn Gold predicts liveblogging, Produced by, Spring 2004

10 (OR SO) YEARS AT A GLANCE

2001 • 2002 • 2003 • 2004 • 2005 • 2006 • 2007 • 2008 • 2009 • 2010 • 2011 • 2012 • 2013

June, 2001 First members invited to join PGA’s New Media Council.

April 23, 2005 Co-founder Jawed Karim uploads first-ever YouTube video, Me at the Zoo.

August, 2003 Myspace launches.


November 5th, 2005 Xbox 360 launches.

September, 2006 Facebook opened for public accounts.

September 13, 2006 The Los Angeles Times breaks the story that the video blog lonelygirl15 is a scripted storytelling piece and not an authentic teen diary.

November, 2006 PlayStation 3, Wii launch.

October 4, 2006 South Park introduces audiences to machinima (and serious pwnage) in landmark “Make Love, Not Warcraft” episode.


November 13, 2006 Netflix announces plans to offer streaming content to PCs via broadband Internet. Initial library includes 1,000 films.

January 16, 2007 Netflix’s deal with Starz gives subscribers instant access to 2,500+ films and television programs.

October 1, 2008 Netflix’s deal with Starz gives subscribers instant access to 2,500+ films and television programs.

December 10, 2009 James Cameron’s Avatar premieres in London. Within 19 days, it grosses $1 billion worldwide.


November 8, 2011 Activision publishes Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3, generating $400 million in the first 24 hours and grossing $1 billion in just 16 days.

January 21, 2012 PGA announces 30 Rock Presents: Jack Donaghy, Executive Superhero as winner of the first-ever Producers Guild Award for Outstanding Web Series.

May 26, 2012 Steven Soderbergh’s Bubble released simultaneously in theaters and digitally via HDNet Movies; DVD released four days later.

September 10, 2007 Chris Crocker implores: “Leave Britney alone!” (45 million views to date).


October 1, 2011 Modern Warfare 3 Activision publishes, generating $400 million in the first 24 hours and grossing $1 billion worldwide.


July 18, 2013 Netflix’s House of Cards becomes first digitally-distributed series to earn major Emmy nominations.

“Properties and characters no longer need to be introduced exclusively via the television or feature film screen. Video games have already proven their worth as powerhouse creative outlets, and the Internet and mobile arenas are realms worthy of serious consideration.”
Nicholas de Wolff, Produced by, Spring 2005

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“Properties and characters no longer need to be introduced exclusively via the television or feature film screen. Video games have already proven their worth as powerhouse creative outlets, and the Internet and mobile arenas are realms worthy of serious consideration.”
Nicholas de Wolff, Produced by, Spring 2005

“Next, people are going to be cutting, pasting and sharing TV experiences.”
Shawn Gold predicts liveblogging, Produced by, Spring 2004
For a long time, we’ve talked about convergence as a phenomenon in progress. Technology would change the way people consumed content, with a lens on the passive consumer. Just lean back and watch whatever you want, whenever you want, from a single device. What we often forget is how critical art is to driving change, how art changes our behavior, the way we think, what we talk about, and can ultimately serve as connective tissue between millions of people around the world. The beauty of the technology convergence that has been occurring at an exponential rate for decades is that it is empowering more people to consume more art and influence each other around the world, which ultimately drives more creation.

In reality, convergence has already happened; it just turns out to be different from what we expected. It’s not only about the consolidation of devices we consume content on — quite the opposite — it’s about the exponential expansion of the places we access content and how content is now available to billions around the world in real time. Yes, innovation has made access to content more efficient; but the real driver of this content revolution is, and will continue to be, the collision of multiple innovations, changing not only how we consume our content, but also how we engage with it.

What we are experiencing is a social convergence. Platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Tumblr, Reddit and Instagram keep consumers connected in real time and on a global basis. Innovation has redefined how humans interact and communicate, exponentially magnifying our ability to socialize around content experiences. This has spurred a revolution never before imagined and has changed our business indelibly. Creators and consumers are now globally connected and “always on” with infinite capacity to connect, putting the relationship between creator and consumer in the driver’s seat, oscillating back and forth to create art that expands way beyond a single device or format. Together, they determine what, how, and how much content will influence social culture and global thinking. Content is art. Cultural influence is the way by which art is measured; and the technology convergence and social convergence have amplified the opportunity for art to influence culture a million times larger than any other period of time.

The story of Neill Blomkamp illustrates the point, as new platforms allowed creators and consumer to directly connect and birth a new IP as a result of social convergence. As a TV commercial director, he made several shorts on his off time and released them online to huge fan reaction. One specifically was Alive in Joburg, which was a short that showed the skeleton of what was to become his first feature film. His short became massively popular among Web viewers, gaining a large audience through social sharing. Eventually, the shorts caught the attention of Peter Jackson, who had already sought out Blomkamp to direct a feature film for the hit game Halo 3 as a direct result of the trilogy of short films/commercials directed by Blomkamp in 2007 for Halo. The ultimate result was the 2009 film District 9, which grossed more than $200M worldwide, seven times the $30M budget for a sci-fi movie. Despite his newcomer status and the project’s modest budget, the film was a hit with fans and critics alike. This August, he releases his new film: Elysium. Blomkamp has continued to embrace the social convergence and released a short in 2010 that has left fans wondering about its connection to Elysium or another feature. Elysium marks the culmination of tremendous success reached in just a few years, from the launch of his trilogy in 2007, District 9 in 2009, and TIME magazine naming Blomkamp one of its...
This third wave offers three crucial features not found in continue to pave the way for each other. Both have pushed and vertical networks like Machinima, StyelHaul, Tastemade serving the masses (YouTube being the most significant shift, platforms such as Netflix, Hulu and YouTube are focused on programming where the rebirth of both broadcast and democracy process for content creators and consumers everywhere. The key for creators is to embrace the change and adopt a more open process where willingness to test and fail is celebrated and results in the incubation of much deeper and groundfrisheds that fans love.

I Want My VOD

Think back to 10 years ago: How many times did you watch a TV show or cable movie simply because there was "nothing else on"? That doesn't have to happen today. Thanks to VOD services and the Internet, your viewing is no longer dictated by what's on at a given moment or by a narrow number of outlets available. To many users, having instant access and virtually unlimited choice is absolutely required — not to mention the ability to watch an entire 13-hour season of a show over the course of a weekend, if one so desired. In fact, binge viewing has become so common, it's what gave Netflix streaming into the dominant force it is today. Art and technology are meeting to change the way we behave and think.

The result of all of this is that the power is now in the hands of the audience. Rather than the networks pushing their content, it is the viewer who is doing the pulling. Fans get more of what they want. Creative visions can remain strong. Only the fittest survive, but the opportunities have expanded and the definition of survivors has changed to those who embrace focus and target "narrow" but large audiences. More creations will find their fit among a larger core audience. And those that do make it will earn the most devoted followings. A success story like this requires reimagining what success looks like. What is your dream? To be among the few who succeed via traditional networks or studios? Or could you offer your work directly to audiences on a platform such as YouTube, Hulu, Facebook or Machinima? Could success be driven by a social conversation between you and your potential fan base?

Maybe it sounds too unconventional, too risky; but remember, as a creator and an entrepreneur, you already take considerable risks when you produce your work. In any case, the convention is changing. This year, Netflix picked up 14 Emmy nominations for its original series — a first for online-only programming — while broadcast networks did not receive a single drama Emmy nomination for the second year in a row. This just goes to show that success will ultimately be measured by absolute influence — not by method of distribution. Do people really believe this trend will retreat? What if YouTube launches a drama that reaches 100 million people in seven days? We could have an event the size of the Super Bowl every week for a drama series. (If that kind of scale isn't always an option, and even then, it can be stifling. A big-budget film can take years to produce, and if it underperforms, the result is devastating. Failure is simply not an option. We shouldn't have to live in fear of failure; we should be open to learning from it. Global platforms that empower the consumer favor the organic growth of an idea and allow us to create smaller pieces, releasing them gradually over time. This process gives us the room to fail, succeed, learn, grow, and build up our IP. Online audiences are willing to accept failure if they see that you are engaging them in the process and taking them for the ride toward something greater.

It can also benefit us to remain flexible in sharing our ideas. From mash-ups to parodies to fan films, the most successful new franchise will embrace the power of the fan-created content. But before you sic your legal team on the next guy who borrows your idea, consider the story of Kevin Tancharoen: Virtually unknown as a director outside of dance videos just three years ago, he created a short film based on the classic Mortal Kombat video game. It was inadvertently leaked on YouTube, receiving instant, massive attention from fans of the game across the globe. Though Warner Bros. could have come after Tancharoen, they instead embraced the chance to reinvigorate the franchise and opted to work with the director. The resulting Web series — Mortal Kombat: Legacy, which was hosted on Machinima — was the most popular in history. A highly anticipated second season will launch on Machinima this fall, and Tancharoen is set to direct a feature length film for Warner Bros. in 2015, reinvigorating IP and reinventing a career.

No Country for New Media

America is "no longer the world's only powerful media-producing nation," declared Henry Jenkins in 2001. The online space has made the world much smaller, allowing for an easier flow of communication, sharing and influence. Other countries can culturally impact one another, and even, more than ever before. This has resulted in a more democratic process for content creators and consumers everywhere. It also opens the channels for capturing more viewers worldwide; and this, in turn, allows creators to reach a deeper, core fan base — rather than a broader, more general one. Instead of diluting content to appeal more to a mainstream audience at home, you can keep focused on the core of a story as you reach a more focused audience on a global scale. Just look at the show Fringe. It is estimated by some insiders that Fringe has more than 20 million fans worldwide, but its domestic audience of 4 million isn't large enough for broadcast TV networks; thus the show was can- celed after the 2012 season. Will this continue to happen in a world where video platforms reach a billion people a month, or a vertical network for sci-fi fans reaches 200 mil- lion unique viewers a month (almost twice the total number of U.S. households)? In the traditional TV system, world- wide success depends on domestic distribution. Should our creative works be at the mercy of this outdated model? The global, social and technology convergence is changing this
Approach is only learned through execution.

On the other hand, we don’t have to completely abandon the standards that make sense for us. Some directors have assumed that entering an online medium means they must become a one-stop shop — not just creating the film, but also handling the marketing and everything else. Making the move away from traditional venues doesn’t have to mean overex­
tending yourself or compromising the process. Recognize your skill set and focus on that; allow others to handle the rest. Networks such as Machinima provide the support and structure to allow content creators to thrive online.

Shift Your Approach

Online success won’t happen overnight, but content can be launched much faster than via traditional channels. And you aren’t nearly as limited by length, structure, platform, etc. One episode could be two minutes long, while the next goes more in-depth and spans two hours. It’s a serial narrative now, but the world you’ve created may also lend itself to a full-length feature or even a video game. Maybe it’s linear; maybe it’s interactive. It could do both. In the current digital renaissance, audiences devour this kind of immersive IP. If you can capture their imaginations, they will follow you across various technologies, multiple social networks, from any corner of the globe. That’s the true meaning of conver­
gence.

All of that said, it is important to fully understand how the digital content revolution has forced change. Binge view­
ing means that we no longer have to wait a week between episodes, and that’s something to consider when constructing a series. Season 4 of Arrested Development was released all at once, specifically so that the fans — after waiting for years with bated breath — could watch the entire series at once. Expecting less of a gap between episode views, the writers need to as­sume that content is rewarded by YouTube’s recommendation engine, and its popularity will grow exponentially. A seasoned YouTuber knows how to craft their presence in order to seize our attention and fully capitalize on this flow.

This may change how you handle certain details, such as starting with a cold open in order to draw a viewer in immediately and make sure the viewer stays after the first 10 seconds (it has been said that 30%–40% of people drop if they are interrupted); or posting credits in the video descrip­
tion, rather than rolling them at the end of the episode so the consumer can immediately jump into the next cold open and remain engaged for hours. Many standard practices have to be reexamined in order to succeed in new media. A paradigm shift requires shifts in approach, and that approach is only learned through execution.

Just Go Do

The beauty of online entertainment is that we can learn as we go. The key is simply to start. The landscape will keep chang­
ing, and we just have to embrace it and continue to adapt at every turn. Fight it, ignore it, and get left behind. Don’t let fear, ego or purist values get in the way. Imagine how fearful it will feel when in five years or less, global networks with direct-to-consumer relationships will be the new program­
ing brands, and you still have not adjusted while the Neill Blomkamps, Jon Chus and Kevin Tancharorns of this world will have already become some mix of the Howard Gordons, J.J. Abrams and Ridley Scotts of today’s world. As the vision­
ary founder of Machinima (and my uncle who I look up to very much) always says, Just Go Do. You will regret any other action.

This is the golden age for creators. You are empowered, more than ever, to take your creative path into your own hands. It’s your chance to get your work seen faster and by more people; to try new things and get direct feedback; to make strong work for a specific breed of fan; and to garner a larger and more devoted audience. Take advantage of it. Eventually, as the traditional networks and studios lay more of a claim in the online space, the rules may change again. Now is the time to get your work out there, push the limits, and be a part of wherever this convergence takes us next.

Aaron DeBevoise is the Executive Vice President of Network Programming at Machinima. In this role, he oversees pro­
gramming, content development, production, and acquisition across all of Machinima’s varied distribution channels.

...they will follow you across... technologies, ...social networks, from any corner of the globe.
Once not too long ago, media savants spoke of “black boxes,” the pinnacle of technological convergence that would incorporate every device in your living room within a single box. Ever since the sixth generation of video game consoles — the PlayStation 2 (PS2) and the original Xbox — industry watchers have believed that the video game console had the potential to become that very “black box.” Those machines brought DVD and online capabilities along with their games, with the PS2 especially recalled as a driving force behind the uptick of early DVD adoption, as many snapped up a copy of *The Matrix* with their console in the earlier days of the millennium.

The next generation of consoles brought even more changes to the forefront, including the ability to share media wirelessly from a PC to a PlayStation 3 or Xbox 360 console, as well as Internet browsing on the consoles. Additionally, the PlayStation 3 brought high-definition content to many homes with its Blu-ray disc drive, while the Xbox 360 continued the online revolution they had started by expanding their Xbox Live gaming service to include an online marketplace offering up games, music and videos on demand to users, like *Web series The Guild* and *Red vs. Blue*. Nintendo’s Wii on the other hand, completely changed gaming with a stronger emphasis on interactive and physical play with their revolutionary Wii-Mote motion controller. That in turn would spark responses from their competitors: Sony with its Move device, a wireless motion controller very similar to the Wii’s, and Microsoft’s Kinect, a motion-sensing camera that could also respond to voice commands. Through the device, casual gamers could dance or work out and even control the console through a combination of swiping gestures and voice commands, recalling Steven Spielberg’s prescient Minority Report.

Now, enter the eighth generation of video game consoles: the Wii U (already available), PlayStation 4 and Xbox One (both due late this year). The previous generation had already brought sweeping changes that gave the video game console more prominence in our living rooms. But bear in mind, the last generation of consoles was designed in an era when smart phones weren’t as prevalent and tablets hadn’t yet crept into the public consciousness. When the first console of that generation — the Xbox 360 — was sold, the first-generation iPhone hadn’t even hit the market. Console companies used to have to contend only with competition from rival console manufacturers, but things have changed. Today, when a smart phone can be used for music, games, video, online communications (and yes, actual telephone functions), game consoles are now vying with phones and tablets in the game department and with broadband cable and Internet, video on demand and various online streaming platforms for video entertainment.

**More Screens, Different Viewing**

Instead of resisting these new platforms, this generation of consoles has shown a collective willingness to embrace them in one form or another. More than ever, these devices have moved beyond machines for gaming, to become a critical piece (perhaps the critical piece) of the home entertainment system.

On initial glance, the companies seem to have stuck with the strategies that worked for them in the past. Nintendo has chosen to roll once again with a focus on new interactive gaming experiences. Compared to its predecessor, the Wii U is better equipped for connection and interactivity between the console and other devices. The Wii U Gamepad, with its tablet-like design, stands as an obvious candidate for a variety of second-screen experiences.

The concept of the “second screen” has been gaining currency within the paradigm of home entertainment in the past year. The second screen serves as a companion for the content you’re consuming on a primary screen, typically a TV monitor. A second-screen platform, such as a tablet or mobile app, might provide you with behind-the-scenes informa-
tion or trivia during a film or television show. On the Wii U, this concept is further developed. For example, gestures can be used to transfer video content between the first and second screens.

On the Wii U’s feet, both the PlayStation 4 and Xbox One will possess advanced second-screen capabilities. A slew of devices such as tablets and phones can be used as second screens for viewing video on the PlayStation 4. They’re not even counting the PlayStation Vita handheld device, which itself can be used not only as a second screen but also as a controller for the system.

The Digital Debate

The more interesting battle on hand is the one between Sony and Microsoft. Due to the Wii’s more casual audience, the Nintendo has taken the more traditional approach, once again aiming for the hard-core gaming faithful. On the other hand, Microsoft has been expanding its audience aggressively, with a focus on reaching customers outside of the traditional gamer through various other entertainment options on the console, including the Kinect device.

The differences really shine through at this year’s E3, when both Microsoft and Sony gave the world their first in-depth looks at the consoles. The Xbox One even had a digital management rights system that would tie all game purchases (for both digital and physical copies) to a user’s Xbox Live account and their Xbox One console. This practice would limit how games could be loaned to friends or family by restricting access to either the local/linked game console or through a cloud-based game library. That game library could then be opened to 10 “family” members, with an allocation of one remote player per game. 2) The console also required a connection to the Internet at least once every 24 hours in order to facilitate synchronization of the library and the game updates.

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Onward to the Future

Could movies and television content become even more interactive? This is purely speculation, but there’s no reason the Kinect couldn’t be integrated into traditional viewing experiences. The new Kinect sensor can supposedly detect the heart rate of the gamer as he or she sits in front of the game, adjusting for the intensity of a physical activity. Now imagine a horror movie where the scares are adjusted according to your heart rate: Or perhaps your mood might dictate the course of a story. Expect the use of these new gestures to be used in a variety of media, from games to television shows. The future is now, and the possibilities are endless.

Naturally, reaction to these policies, especially online, were massive, with many games and even entire franchises being showcased to the world. Consumers have now numerous options to entertain themselves. A video game console, phone, tablet or computer can all easily pull up games, videos and music at a whim. As technology converges and devices are able to perform similar functions (albeit on different scales, e.g., a phone cannot replicate the cinema experience), is entertainment converging along with it? Think about it. We don’t use dedicated devices for just one purpose anymore. We used to only be able to watch television on a television set but now we could easily do that by opening up Hulu on an Internet browser. We used to only play games at the video arcade or on consoles but now we can do that on our phones. So, are the different forms of entertainment: television, movies, games and music all converging into just... entertainment?

Bleaky but surely, they are. The signs have been apparent for years... TV (interactive television) was one of the earliest examples, television that managed to merge the interactive element of games by involving the viewer, such as the voting element of American Idol. Transmedia storytelling has also allowed for stories to be told over multiple platforms; worlds and franchises that started on television, like Lost and The Walking Dead, are being expanded further through diverse media, such as books, Web series and games. Not even big-budget video games are starting to reflect the scope and depth of cinema. One of the best examples is the massive role-playing space opera franchise, Mass Effect, being developed as a motion picture by Legendary Pictures.
Reflections from the Chairs of the PGA New Media Council

MARC LEVEY
(Founding Chair 2002–2004)

Though we recently celebrated the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the PGA’s New Media Council, the idea to recognize, represent and protect producers working outside of the traditional medium of film and television was born a few years earlier.

It was in 1997 when I was working at Disney’s interactive division that I first noticed that many game producers around town were responsible for budgets, talent and timelines that rivaled our counterparts in television and film. These talented game producers, along with producers of broadband content, DVDs, digital effects, interactive TV and emerging mobile technologies were without a home. They were not recognized nor represented by any substantial organization that could address and protect the issues that they were facing on a daily basis as producers.

Over the next few years, the idea slowly evolved until one weekend when I attended the Yahoo Online Festival, I got my hands on the “Digital Media White Papers” issued by the WGA and the PGA. As I immersed myself in their visions for how the Internet and other digital technologies would impact writers and directors, it became apparent that the Producers Guild of America could do something that would provide industry-wide vision and leadership in this rapidly-growing marketplace.

Considering that film and television were already established before the Producers Guild was formed, members of our National Board of Directors recognized that we were at a unique crossroads in the history of media, where the PGA could provide enormous value as the industry moved into the 21st century.

With the establishment of an exploratory committee, the PGA began its journey down this historic path. In months, our committee had roundtable discussions about the evolution of media as well as the implications of transitioning from analog to digital media. More importantly, we began to decipher the nuances between digital media, interactive media, and new media – the latter inclusive of all new technologies that we couldn’t even imagine yet.

A perfect example of technology we couldn’t imagine being developed was earlier that year when Japanese scientists introduced prototypes of touchable holograms, quite possibly ushering in a new genre and era of storytelling. Another example of unforeseen prototypes of touchable holograms, quite possibly ushering in a new genre and era of storytelling. Another example of unforeseen trends in technology and media is the social revolution. Years ago when interactive TV was the game changer, transforming the traditional one-direction experience into a two-way experience was something very few could have imagined. In the past year, networks have invested in what is being called social TV, where the connection and dialogue between viewers themselves would play a vital role in the interactive TV experience.

While the mission of the New Media Council has evolved along with the platforms and technologies empowering our producers, one crucial benefit of membership has remained the same: being a part of the conversation. Members of the PGA’s NMC are among the brightest and most innovative producers in the world. As our President, Mark Gordon, recently stated, “The NMC provides the PGA with the perspective and exposure to a world of technology and storytelling never seen before.”

Digital media is evolving so rapidly that it’s not hard to envision a day in the near future when the distinction between “new” and “traditional” media disappears entirely. That said, the NMC will still be here for the foreseeable future, discovering and embracing the newest technologies to facilitate the process of what we all love to do so much: sharing stories. Here’s to another 10 years of storytelling without boundaries.

MICHAEL PALMIERI
(Chair 2008–2011)

Thanks to our two previous Chairs, Marc Levy and Brian Seth Hurst, we had established the New Media Council at the PGA and introduced the organization to the world. During my tenure as Chair, the NMC Board sought to increase the Council’s membership, generate events that would service our new members, create an administrative and organizational structure that would support each individual PGA member, and foster the PGA’s presence in LA, New York and San Francisco. We also outlined the credits that would reflect and represent work that our members created.

With the guidance of the PGA’s Supervisor of Communications, Chris Green, we created and published the first post-production credits book by the PGA. Thanks to Board member Shawn Gold, the PGA NMC and The Hollywood Reporter partnered to create and publish our first ever New Media Power List. The list, composed of producers and innovators in new media, has since been reimagined into the PGA Digital V.I.P. honors.

Thanks to Board member W. B. Montomery, we launched Wire, the internal newsletter distributed to NMC members and PGA members who opted to receive it.

We created and bestowed the first-ever Marc A. Levy Distinguished Service Award which honors the work of a Board member and general member who have provided exceptional service to the NMC.

East Coast Board member Marc Scarpa doubled the size of the New York chapter of the NMC, while Board member Amy Jacobson Kurokawa founded the San Francisco-based chapter, which we know today as PGA Northwest.

Thanks to a generous $50,000 sponsorship from Myspace.com, we partnered with them and Fox Television to create a worldwide contest for broadband producers. This contest gave PGA members and non-members an opportunity of landing a drama or comedy development deal with Fox Television.

Board members James Fino and Ivan Bruce helped shepherd over 50 PGA NMC networking, recruitment and education events. J. Antonio Maldonado, Abi O’Gold, and Nicholas de Wolff continued to expand sponsorship opportunities, which included our first-ever partnership with Intel. Lori Schwartz and I met with the PGA’s East Coast Board member Marc Scarpa to double the size of the East Coast chapter. The PGA’s NMC Board and I worked to bring our first-ever PGA Digital Gala to New York City, where we honored Pixar’s chief executive officer, John Lasseter, and game producer Will Wright (The Sims), with the Vanguard Award.

I remain incredibly proud to say that by the end of my tenure, our Board had tripled the number of members in our Council, and firmly established our presence in New York and San Francisco.

ALISON SAVITCH
(Chair 2008–2011)

Was I really NMC Chair for three years? Every time I thought I got out, they kept pulling me back in… Of course, I am only kidding! I loved being NMC Chair, possibly more than most. As Michael Palmieri jokingly said to me when I was asked if I wanted to step into his daddy’s shoes and now, the NMC needs a permanent Chair. (Chair 2008–2011)

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from the very start. (Also, thanks to James Fino and Jeannette DePatie!) Most importantly, it was never about ego, but always about helping the organization as a whole move forward. To do that, I was constantly pushing to bring our Councils together to create an understanding of how traditional skills would translate to our new media platforms. I could see that the future would include many jobs in the transmedia space, and as the industry hit some hard times, those who had a grounding in new media could reconcile and move laterally to this new space for jobs.

I walked into the Digital V.I.P. party this past year and Mark Gordon walked up to me. He put his arm around me and said, “Well, you guys have finally done it. You’re taking over.” I thought to myself, “Wow, I think my job here is done.”

Ten years ago, the NMC started — in no small part due to the intestinal fortitude and gumption of Marc Levey and the other Founding Board members — as a home to producers of stories told on new platforms with new media and in new ways. By its very definition, new media meant that it was different than “traditional” formats like TV and movies. Ten years later, some of that new media we had back then looks pretty traditional. Production tools, distribution platforms, economic models, size of screens, disruptive tech, consumption patterns, buzzwords and more have all come and gone during that time. The pace of change in the media landscape has approached Moore’s Law-like rates.

While the techniques and tools have evolved rapidly, there has been a constant: All these new stories need producers who get sh*t done. NMC members are on the bleeding edge of getting sh*t done.

That’s what I admired about the membership when I joined the NMC back in 2006 — that they made things happen. That drive is what I experienced as an NMC Board member as I saw the past Chairs each address the changing landscape head-on, with an eye toward what would best support the membership. And ultimately, it’s the reason why I wanted to become Chair — to be in the thick of the thick.

I’ve been fortunate to know multiple NMC members who’ve helped me experience a better and more exciting professional story. I’ve been able to get staff done that I wouldn’t have been able to do on my own. Over this next year, I want to help our existing and new members have similar opportunities. But these opportunities don’t just happen. They need to be produced. They need you and your active participation.

We need your help planning monthly events, mentoring PGA members, producing content for the PGA YouTube channel, tweeting for us, recruiting and vetting recruits, sharing your experience in *Produced* by magazine and more.

We need your help meeting big hairy goals like recruiting NMC member 1,000 and creating new job opportunities by reaching out to the Producers and AP Councils to make sure they turn to us when they need a digital initiative launched.

But most of all, the NMC needs you. This is my last year on the Board, which means I’ll be a one-term Chair. I’ll either be a total lame duck or hopefully, with your help, we’ll be able to build on the rich 10-year story the NMC has been producing.

Our next NMC Board meeting in Los Angeles is September 11 at 6 p.m. in the PGA office. You’re invited. The next time I’m in New York City, you’re invited to grab coffee. When I head up Northwest, you’ll be invited. The NMC is always on the hunt for people looking to interact, participate and push the bounds of our bleeding edge.

Basically what I’m saying is: If you believe yourself to be the kind of producer who gets sh*t done, email me: mbellavia@producersguild.org.
The New Media Council (NMC) marks its 10th anniversary this year. Its continued growth and the increasing sophistication of the content created by NMC producers testify to the vision and foresight of NMC founder Marc Levey.

When the PGA founded the NMC, there was virtually no truly interactive television programming — at least, not in the sense that consumer and storyteller could interact on air in real time. The Guild showed faith that the future of interactive storytelling would look like something — even if at the time there was no clear consensus on just what that “something” would look like.

The Future Gets Clearer

Ten years later, NMC members’ creative storytelling and growing influence are being felt across all channels — film, television, online, and mobile. Perhaps the most resonant example of true interactive programming — or, in the latest parlance, “connected television” — aired on Oscar night in Sacramento, Calif.

“I’ve been producing both on-air content and online content for years,” says PGA NW Chair Emeritus Amy Jacobson Kurokawa, a producer for ABC affiliate KXTV-TV. “I’ve been bridging the online and on-air content worlds for a long time. When our station decided to broadcast a post-Oscars special, I saw an opportunity to create a program that not only would break the fourth wall, but would do so via real-time interaction that was also on air live.”

Even though what Jacobson Kurokawa envisioned had little precedent, she had no doubts she could pull it off. She was obviously convincing. “I told the general manager what I had in mind, and she gave me the go-ahead.”

Simply put, Jacobson Kurokawa’s vision involved leveraging existing technology to create an environment in which the on-air talent and the viewers watching at home — whether on television or on a computer — would engage and interact with each other in real time. The television and digital experience would be fully integrated. And displaying a classic producer’s resourcefulness, Jacobson Kurokawa built everything she needed for the broadcast from a range of tools, each of which would manifest a portion of her vision.

Essentially, once the post-Oscars broadcast began, on-air talent and viewers found themselves sharing the same on-air online space. Anyone could submit a comment, send a tweet, or upload a picture; the feed was captured and broadcast in real time and displayed on the right-hand portion of the screen. People could also participate in interactive polls, with the results available in real time. Show co-hosts could chat with viewers or respond in real time to questions or prompt viewers for opinions and ideas.

Meanwhile, Jacobson Kurokawa was producing hands-on in the control room. She monitored and aggregated all of the tweets, pictures, and chats while simultaneously generating polls for people to take — again, all in real time.

“What also made it revolutionary,” says Jacobson Kurokawa, “was that we broke the fourth wall. We made viewers part of the coverage, and the show was actually centered around the dialogue we enabled between our viewers, our show hosts, and our reporters in the field.”

“It was like our viewers were in the studio with us,” said Dale Schornack, the KXTV anchorman who co-hosted the show. “That made it a lot more fun, and added a whole new energy, a new dynamic, that we hadn’t had before.”
Working It Out

Given that this was a pioneering effort, there were surprisingly few glitches in the run-up to the actual show. The system's fundamental simplicity helped: "We couldn't use the lower third of the screen," she recalls, noting that real estate had always been reserved for on-screen information. "We decided to use the right-hand side of the screen for all our interactive content, but it was a bit of a balancing act. You needed to make it big enough to be able to read everybody's comments, but you also needed to leave as much of the rest of the screen as possible for the talent." That took some trial and error. "But I always knew it was doable," she said.

Priming the Pump

Of course, just because you build it, doesn't mean they will come. So calling on her many years of dual experience as an on-air and online producer, Jacobson Kurokawa cleverly primed the pump. She created a website that linked to detailed Oscar information and a range of contests and activities to draw people in and in effect, make them part of the show weeks before it even aired. "It got us a lot of stickiness both before and during the event, be it a talk show, an event show, a sports show, a news show, or any similar storytelling environment.

"Advertisers like to be innovative; it helps them stand out for producers to monetize their programming." And for the viewers, Jacobson Kurokawa says it couldn't be easier. They could participate using the phones, computers, and televisions they already had — or just sit back and watch the show.

The Future of the Future?

"This was a pure digital interactive TV experience," said Jacobson Kurokawa. "To have produced such a rich interactive experience on air that was easy for people to participate in, and that broke the fourth wall — and as far as I know to what the viewers had to say — that was thrilling." "It was extraordinarily cool to post a comment and see it pop up on your TV and know that thousands of others are seeing the same thing at the same time," says anchorman Schornack. "Seeing the anchors, reporters, and experts react to what the viewers had to say — that was thrilling." Jacobson Kurokawa is certainly thrilled to see where and how what she pioneered will be adopted next. "It's very versatile," she says. "While this was a post-Oscars special, it could just as easily be used in any connected TV live programming event, be it a talk show, an event show, a sports show, a news show, or any similar storytelling environment.

“There’s really no downside to this.”

The right column led viewers to participate in the actual KXTV broadcast. In the two weeks leading up to the Oscars, there were contests that compelled viewers to watch KXTV to get the answers, which they’d then text in. The winner was chosen at random. Another contest invited viewers to upload 30-second videos via their cell phones; the winner got to play fashion expert on the actual broadcast.

When the broadcast began, another link on this Web page led to where the actual live broadcast was streaming. That’s where people submitted their chat comments and answers to the online polls and questions. Those, plus the images and tweets submitted through cell phones, formed the basis for the content displayed in real time on the right-hand side of the television screen.

Jacobson Kurokawa launched the site two weeks prior to the Oscars telecast and promoted it heavily both on-air and through social media. That engaged viewers in the broadcast ahead of time, built two weeks of viewer anticipation and excitement leading up to Oscar night, and paved the way for the actual integration of viewers and broadcast when the show went live.

Once the show began, polls, comments, tweets, and images displayed in real time on the right side of the screen. That’s where sponsor Sleep Train enjoyed a significant presence, adding branded comments to the mix in real-time. Conversation between in-studio talent, reporters in the field, and viewers felt both natural and seamless.

"It was extraordinarily cool to post a comment and see it pop up on your TV and know that thousands of others are seeing the same thing at the same time," says anchorman Schornack. "Seeing the anchors, reporters, and experts react to what the viewers had to say — that was thrilling." Jacobson Kurokawa is certainly thrilled to see where and how what she pioneered will be adopted next. "It’s very versatile," she says. "While this was a post-Oscars special, it could just as easily be used in any connected TV live programming event, be it a talk show, an event show, a sports show, a news show, or any similar storytelling environment.

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“Advertisers like to be innovative; it helps them stand out from their competitors,” Jacobson Kurokawa observes. “In essence, this was a cool new method of product placement. And because it’s a great vehicle for sponsors, it’s a great way for producers to monetize their programming.”

And for the viewers, Jacobson Kurokawa says it couldn’t be easier. They could participate using the phones, computers, and televisions they already had — or just sit back and watch the show.

The Future of the Future?

“This was a pure digital interactive TV experience,” said Jacobson Kurokawa. “To have produced such a rich interactive experience on air that was easy for people to participate in, and that broke the fourth wall — and as far as I know to be one of the first to do it — is beyond exciting.” “It was extraordinarily cool to post a comment and see it pop up on your TV and know that thousands of others are seeing the same thing at the same time,” says anchorman Schornack. “Seeing the anchors, reporters, and experts react to what the viewers had to say — that was thrilling.” Jacobson Kurokawa is certainly thrilled to see where and how what she pioneered will be adopted next. “It’s very versatile,” she says. “While this was a post-Oscars special, it could just as easily be used in any connected TV live programming event, be it a talk show, an event show, a sports show, a news show, or any similar storytelling environment.

“There’s really no downside to this.”
The Company Line

by Rodman Gregg

PHOENIX PICTURES

As producers Mike Medavoy and Arnie Messer reflect back on their years of working together to build Phoenix Pictures, their joint history of making 40-odd movies under the Phoenix banner has rarely been equaled in the motion picture business. It is a testament to the teamwork that Medavoy and Messer have enjoyed since leaving studio posts at Columbia and TriStar Pictures, that has allowed their company to flourish for more than two decades. Today, there are some changes afoot at the company. Though Medavoy and Messer will remain partners, Phoenix continues to evolve as both individuals take their producing careers in exciting new directions.

Entering the Phoenix offices in Century City, the nearly 100 posters covering the walls reflect a prestigious output of movies that you seldom see anywhere in Hollywood outside of a studio lot. Many of these reflect Medavoy’s prior work as a top executive at United Artists, and then the fabled Orion Pictures, and later as Chairman of TriStar Pictures at Sony. The others are the movies they have done together at Phoenix, most recently, the very successful Black Swan and Shutter Island.

Their friendship goes back decades. “I was running all of the international operations plus domestic television at Sony,” recalls Messer, “and Mike was chairman of TriStar. A lot of his product went through either my international operations or my TV operations.” Around 1993, Medavoy was stepping down from his position at TriStar and was asking himself, “what’s next?” With a background as a former agent, and a top executive at three studios, his experience gave him some options, as did his strong industry relationships, including everyone from Woody Allen to Kevin Costner. (Medavoy championed and green-lighted Dances with Wolves.)

With both men coming from a studio background, the Phoenix operation is reminiscent of a studio operation, albeit on a smaller scale. It’s a busy place, and with several films in pre-production, Phoenix has a sizable team of creative and production executives. The principals do seem to favor a laid-back studio atmosphere, complete with Tuesday-morning staff meetings. Says Messer, “We’ve had a team approach as to producing. One year we had six movies going. In terms of individual involvement, everybody took a piece of the load, and that worked really well for us.”

Medavoy continues, “One of the things that has been important to me over the years is mentoring and helping others get to a place in their careers where they can go out on their own. Brad Fischer, who worked with us, just started another company. Marc Platt also worked with me. Stacey Snider too. Now, we can’t take credit for them. They deserve their own credit. They just happened to walk through my life, and then they moved on. I’m thrilled for all of them. They are doing well and should be very proud of themselves.”

Messer concurs. “We were always delighted with guys who have a lot of energy and smarts,” he observes, “and we could keep them from making the obvious mistakes and hook them up with connections. Like I said, we were a team.”

Ten years ago, Medavoy wrote a best-selling book, one that anyone in our business should read: You’re Only as Good as Your Next One: 100 Great Films, 100 Good Films, and 100 for Which I Should Be Shot. “Like in the title of the book,” he says, “about a
There’s always stuff that we go back to and say, ‘You know, maybe there’s another way of doing this.’ Times have changed. Is there something we didn’t think about, or is there a writer who wants to rewrite it?”

third of them work, about a third of them are in the middle, and about a third are downright awful. I think if you look at the movies we’ve been involved with, whether it’s The Thin Red Line or The People vs. Larry Flynt, both pictures were nominated for Academy Awards, or Holes or Black Swan or Zodiac… I mean, we did all kinds of things over the years. There was no formula for it.

“And you know, we really didn’t have a lot of money to start the company with,” Medavoy recalls. “I think most people would be surprised at that.” Noting how crucial Phoenix’s first four pictures were for the company, and that all performed well and were critical hits, allowing Phoenix to get up and running, Medavoy adds an interesting qualification. “In truth, actually, they weren’t as good for us as they could have been,” he confesses. “Because we spent more money on them than we probably should’ve. If we had been like Summit, which had Twilight, it would have been a different story. But we continued reinventing ourselves as we went along… But the point is, you have to constantly adapt to whatever is out there. Given that both of us are still here after all these years, I like to think we’ve adapted wherever we could.”

As noted previously, there are some changes afoot at Phoenix. To a degree, Medavoy is once again striking out on his own, while Messer will be producing his own projects. Medavoy will be focusing on China-based projects, including a big-budget World War II period piece.

“Because I was born in China, I have some credibility there, and as a result it’s been easier for me to navigate. As Arnie likes to call it, it’s a Rubik’s Cube. There are all kinds of things you have to adapt to, or keep changing, in order to stay in the game and stay relevant. When I feel I’m no longer relevant, I’ll be the guy to step out and say, ‘I can’t do this anymore.’ At this point of my career, that is obviously not true. And Arnie is the same way.”

Agrees Messer, “At this point in time, we have the luxury of just doing what we want to do.”

Even though the pair may be focusing in different arenas, “Phoenix will continue to exist,” reassures Medavoy. “We go back a long time and we’re friends. We’ve made 40 films while we’ve been here. It’s a living organism. Arnie and I will have projects that we’ll do together, and in fact, we have one of those coming up. And then there’s the library of material that we’ve developed over the years, that continues to live in the sense that things get made three, four, five years after we’ve developed them. There’s always stuff that we go back to and say, ‘You know, maybe there’s another way of doing this.’ Times have changed. Is there something we didn’t think about, or is there a writer who wants to rewrite it?”

Medavoy reflects that if he has a gift at all, it lies in his instinct for finding true talent and compelling projects, including a gut assessment of what can work for a large-enough audience, and from this process trying to make films that are not formulaic but have vivid characters and stories. “It was something I read years ago about Maynard Keynes, the great economist,” he recalls. “He had a gift of intellectual intuition.” Medavoy evidently has worked to develop and apply this same skill, that ‘intellectual intuition’ in choosing the films that have become his body of work. As he notes, “It’s not easily explainable, but most of the time, it works.”

So 2013 marks a new chapter for both producers. “It’s been great,”Arnie Messer reflects. “Phoenix always was unique. We’ve been friends and partners for more than 20 years, and that’s part of our legacy.”
PG&A Green Habitat
Builds R Good for the Soul

“As producers, we tend to be in our head so much,” bemoans Amanda Scarano Carter, Chair of PGA Green West. “It’s very empowering to jackhammer rocks, build scaffolding and put up siding on a roof.”

Really? Safe to say, most producers might list a number of other ways to decompress that don’t include power tools, but speak to any PGA member who’s volunteered for a Habitat for Humanity home build (open to all PGA members) and you’ll find a similar story about a lot of dirt, sore muscles, but a happy heart.

“I dragged my friends kicking and screaming to the party telling them, ‘Come on, this is how you’re going to get your hearts clean!’” laughs Alison Trelaven, former HaPo Films staffer and current VP of Entertainment, Marketing and Communication at Habitat for Humanity of Greater Los Angeles (GLA).

As an international non-profit, Habitat helps build affordable and sustainable single-family homes for low-income families in more than 80 countries. Amazingly, 80 percent of the construction is done by volunteers under the direction of experienced crew leaders. Over the years, Habitat’s Greater Los Angeles chapter has frequently partnered with the entertainment industry, including PGA Green, which shares a kindred passion for helping the environment.

Even the insulation is a blown-in cellulose recycled product from denim,” says PGA Green volunteer Brent Roske, creator of Chasing the Hill, a political drama executive-produced by Roske and West Wing Emmy winner Richard Schiff. “They’re not just handing people houses. They have to really work for it and that sweat equity gives a real pride of ownership. It’s not a handout but a hand up.”

A typical build day starts at 7:45 a.m. and goes until 4 p.m. Volunteer numbers range between 10 to 30 and are broken into teams that work on the home’s interior, exterior or landscaping.

“I hauled concrete,” laughs Amanda. “I’d break it, haul it to the dumpster, then go back and break some more. I was sore for two weeks!”

PGA Green members describe working alongside other fellow producers to make a difference in people’s lives as not only fun but also deeply gratifying. And the reasons don’t stop there.

“The thing I like most about Habitat is that the people getting the house have to log in a lot of hours helping with the build,” says PGA Green volunteer Brent Roske, creator of Chasing the Hill, a political drama executive-produced by Roske and West Wing Emmy winner Richard Schiff. “They’re not just handing people houses. They have to really work for it and that sweat equity gives a real pride of ownership. It’s not a handout but a hand up.”

That hand up includes a zero percent, 30-year loan. Since demand far exceeds supply, potential homeowners are carefully vetted (Habitat boasts less than one percent loan defaults nationwide) and must be willing to invest 500 hours helping construct their new house.

“In the worst time of my life, when I thought it was all over, Habitat showed me the light and blessed me to be one of the Habitat families,” said Betty Monroy, a Lynwood homeowner who worked on construction of her house alongside PGA Green producers. “Behind my walls, I know there is love, because volunteers like you created those walls.”

Walking around the volunteer builder site, scribbled messages are visible on raw wood beams in hallways, staircases and rooms everywhere. “Wishing you much love and happiness in your home.” “Lose your home.” “May U find lots of love here.”

Green tissue, anyone?

In order to raise additional funds, Habitat also asks that volunteer groups make a donation to participate in a build-day. Depending on the sponsor’s non-profit or corporate or status, rates can run between $2,500-$5,000.

“Amanda asked if I’d be interested in auctioning off a walk-on role for our Web series,” said Roske. “I didn’t know how successful it would be. I’m happy the response was so great.”

Great, indeed. The Chasing the Hill role generated more money than previously raised by one of HBO’s top series. Also donating to the cause was The Talk, offered by PGA Green member Joseph Morabito. These opportunities were promoted through Charity Buzz, an Internet company that helps champion worthy causes by connecting bolders with the world’s biggest celebrities and brands.

Catherine Urbanek, the actress who won the bid, was ecstatic. “I love politics and I love politics and have become a huge fan of Chasing the Hill,” she gushed. “As an actor, writer, and producer myself, it’s a thrill to have the opportunity to be involved in this political drama while supporting a valuable cause at the same time. I am looking forward to seeing episode four!”

The builds in Lynwood and in Long Beach are just one of the ways that Hollywood and Habitat are working together. For the last several years, PGA Green also has championed the recycling of studio sets. Instead of dumping items like furniture, appliances, pipes, curtains, carpets, and linoleum in a landfill, these leftovers find multiple new uses/applications or are donated to Habitat’s ReStore outlets to help build or renovate homes for the needy.

Ultimately, PGA Green’s mission is to get all PGA members to adopt a green mindset and incorporate sustainable practices into all productions. Change can be incremental, such as posting instead of printing call sheets, hiring green vendors, and distributing water canisters to cast and crew.

At the initial Lynwood build, PGA Green walked the walk by using a SReel Studio Rentals solar-paneled production truck and Reel Chefs Catering, a green company specializing in vegan food and plant-based plates and utensils that later decompose in the compost pile. PGA Green also posted call sheets online, and wrote and produced a short documentary narrated by Woody Harrelson to raise awareness of effort. The entire team — the production truck, caterer, production and post-production crew, as well as

Over the years, Habitat’s Greater Los Angeles chapter has frequently partnered with the entertainment industry, including PGA Green, which shares a kindred passion for helping the environment.

Left: Christine Marino, Amanda Scarano Carter & Fred Baron Above: PGA Green build crew
PGA Green members, from left: Jo-An Turman, Amanda Scarano Carter, Catherine Urbanek, Rachael Joy, Brent Roska. (Photo: Brittany Kaj Marguleau)

Harrelson, donated their time, talent and treasure in lieu of a cash donation.

“My personal goal is to have environmental initiatives incorporated into production as seamlessly as safety is incorporated into production,” says Amanda, whose vision also includes taking the green message beyond the Guild and to the entertainment community at large.

“We get lots of calls for partnerships both inside and outside the entertainment community,” she says, “but when it comes to working as producers on a production, right now, we have to beg, borrow and steal to make the most of our resources.”

Then, she adds brightly, “However, my goal is to eventually put us out of business!”

–MARION MacKENZIE PYLE

Member Benefits

• Discounted registration for Produced By Conference

• Access to all-new PGA Job Board, online résumé search, employment tools and job forums

• Vote on Producers Guild Awards and receive discount tickets to the event, as well as DVD screeners for awards consideration

• Full access to PGA website including events, calendar, social networking tools

• Eligibility for individual, family and small business healthcare options through Producers Health Insurance Agency

• Participation in the Motion Picture Industry Health, Welfare & Pension Plan

• Eligibility for PGA Mentoring Program

• Listing of contact and credit information in searchable online roster

• Admission to special PGA pre-release screenings and Q&A events

• Free attendance at PGA seminars

• Arbitration of credit disputes

• Wide variety of discounts on events, merchandise, travel

• Complimentary subscription to Produced by
Your PGA Health Benefits

PGA members have a variety of healthcare options available to them. While none of them represents a “perfect plan," many members will be able to improve their coverage or the cost of their coverage through their PGA membership. Members may take advantage of two options: Employer-paid coverage and self-pay coverage.

Qualifying for Employer-Paid Coverage Through the Motion Picture Industry Plan

Am I eligible?
To be eligible for the program, you must...
- Be credited as an executive producer, producer, associate producer or post-production supervisor;
- Work for a company that is an AMPTP signatory, or signatory to Motion Picture Industry Health Plan;
- Work on a theatrical motion picture or primetime network television program; some primetime cable and syndicated series also qualify, as do productions for which an AMPTP member agrees to make contributions; and
- Work on a production that utilizes a West Coast IA Crew.

How many hours do I have to work to qualify for coverage?
To qualify for the Industry Health Plan, a producer must be credited with 600 hours (automatically computed at 56.5 hours per week) within a six-month qualifying period. To maintain coverage, he or she must be credited with at least 400 hours for each subsequent six-month period. If a member becomes ineligible, his or her eligibility for benefits will be reviewed every month until he or she accumulates enough contribution hours within a six-month span to re-qualify for benefits.

I’ve determined that I qualify; how do I get my coverage to start?
Contributions are not automatic; they must be directly requested by the producer. Producers request contributions by signing and submitting a participation form within 60 days of starting eligible employment. If the producer does not submit a signed participation form, he or she will be deemed to have waived his or her right to contributions with respect to the job. Participation forms should be provided by the employer upon request. If you have difficulty obtaining a form, contact PGA National Executive Director Vance Van Petten at (310) 358-9020 x104.

My company isn’t an AMPTP signatory. Am I out of luck?
Not necessarily. If you are employed by a company that is a signatory to both the IATSE Basic Agreement and the Motion Picture Industry Health & Welfare and Pension Plans, you can request that they make voluntary contributions, even if they are not members of the AMPTP. This request has been granted many times, but can be difficult to secure. A good way to know if your production has signed on to the IATSE Basic Agreement is to check if the camera, grips, or sound providers are union.

If I qualify, is my employer required to approve my coverage?
Unfortunately, no. However, the cost to the employer is reasonable enough that many employers will approve the coverage. Additionally, standard practice has dictated (though again, not required) that once a production begins making contributions to the Health Plan for one producer, it will make those same contributions for any eligible producer on the show, provided coverage is requested in a timely fashion.

Self-Pay Plans: Producers Health

In a perfect world, every PGA member would qualify for employer-paid coverage. For those who do not qualify, the PGA offers self-pay options which, because of our group status, are likely to offer better rates than what members can find on the open market.

The Producers Health Plans are available nationally. If you’re currently without health insurance, we encourage you to call immediately to see if you qualify for a plan that suits you. Even if you currently have coverage (particularly other self-pay coverage), it would be worth your while to investigate the options you may have through the PGA self-pay plans.

Questions? Contact:
Employer-paid Plan
Kyle Katz  (310) 358-9020 x101
Self-pay Plans
Scott Brandt  (888) 700-7725

START

Do you have health insurance? yes no
Is it employer-paid? yes no

Call Scott Brandt at (888) 700-7725. Request a quote for Producers Health Insurance.

Is the coverage equal to or better than your current coverage? yes no

You should sign up for the PGA plan. The more members sign up, the lower the average costs, and the better the benefits.

Do you work for an AMPTP signatory? yes no

Congratulations. You’re one of the lucky ones.

Do you work on a theatrical motion picture, primetime network program, or primetime/dramatic first-run syndicated program? yes no

Do you work on a production utilizing a West Coast IA crew? yes no

Do you have been credited with 400 hours of such work over the past six months, assuming a 56-hour workweek? yes no

Request that your employer make contributions into the Motion Picture Industry Plan on your behalf.

Did your employer make the contributions? yes no

Congratulations, you’ve got employer-paid health coverage. You must work 400 hours over the next six months (assuming a 56-hour workweek) to maintain your coverage.

Paid coverage and self-pay coverage.
Members may take advantage of two options: Employer-paid coverage and self-pay coverage.
New Members
The Producers Guild is proud to welcome the following new members, who have joined the Guild since April 1, 2013.

New Members

PRODUCERS COUNCIL

SERGIO AGUERO
NICOLE ALEXANDER
JOSELYN ALLEN
BRANDT ANDERSEN
FONDA ANITA
SASHEEN ARTIS
STEPHEN AUERBACH
RIZA AZIZ
STEFANIE AZPIAZU
TYRA BANKS
MILES BARKEN
BENJAMIN BEATIE
KRISTEN BEISSEL
ROBERT BENJAMIN
PETER BEVAN
SAM BISBEE
RICHARD BOSNER
JOSH COLE
JEFF CONROY
JOE DOVOLA
JEAN DOUMANIAN
CASSIAN ELWES
TEMPLE FENNELL
CHAD GAJADHAR
SHANNON GAULDING
DAYNA GOLDFINE
JOHN GRAY
BEN HABER
MARK HEDELBERGER
TONY MARK
JOEY McFARLAND
SHANNON MONTOSH
KATIE MORAN
GRETCHEN MORNING
ELON MUSK
DEBBIE MYERS
CORIN NELSON
GENEVIEVE NIXON
ALISON OWEN
JONATHAN PARTRIDGE
PALAK PATEL
TARA POWER
BRIAN PUTERMAN
PAUL RETAIWO
SCOTT ROBBE
JESSE RUSSELL
TERRENCE SACCHI
MATTHEW SALLOWAY
GABRIELLE TANA
TROY VANDERHEYDEN
TOM VERICA
EDWARD WALSON
SONDRA WATKIN
PHILIPPA WELLS
LAURIE ZAKS
RON ZODA

NEW MEDIA COUNCIL

LESTER CHUNG
SEAN CUSHING
FELICIA DAY
DAVID GINSBERG
MARK HALL
JULIUS HARPER
DANA BANKS
BRANDT ANDERSEN
FONDA ANITA
SASHEEN ARTIS
STEPHEN AUERBACH
RIZA AZIZ
STEFANIE AZPIAZU
TYRA BANKS
MILES BARKEN
BENJAMIN BEATIE
KRISTEN BEISSEL
ROBERT BENJAMIN
PETER BEVAN
SAM BISBEE
RICHARD BOSNER
JOSH COLE
JEFF CONROY
JOE DOVOLA
JEAN DOUMANIAN
CASSIAN ELWES
TEMPLE FENNELL
CHAD GAJADHAR
SHANNON GAULDING
DAYNA GOLDFINE
JOHN GRAY
BEN HABER
MARK HEDELBERGER
TONY MARK
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SHANNON MONTOSH
KATIE MORAN
GRETCHEN MORNING
ELON MUSK
DEBBIE MYERS
CORIN NELSON
GENEVIEVE NIXON
ALISON OWEN
JONATHAN PARTRIDGE
PALAK PATEL
TARA POWER
BRIAN PUTERMAN
PAUL RETAIWO
SCOTT ROBBE
JESSE RUSSELL
TERRENCE SACCHI
MATTHEW SALLOWAY
GABRIELLE TANA
TROY VANDERHEYDEN
TOM VERICA
EDWARD WALSON
SONDRA WATKIN
PHILIPPA WELLS
LAURIE ZAKS
RON ZODA

AP COUNCIL

Associate Producer/Production Manager
Production Supervisor
AARON CHAMPION
BRIAN EGGLESTON
ADAM ELLISON
NICOLE HANSEN
HAYLEY HELMBIRCH
ATTIA HENRY
GREG HOLSTEIN
MICHAEL HUGHES
SHANNA IGIE
CHRISTOPHER KNOX
CYNTHIA LUSK
KEELY MCCULLOUGH
LAUREN MILES
ROSA NA ORTIZ
TARA PARIS
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AMANDA ROSS
IAN SAMBRO
ROGER SCHWARTZ
JENNIFER SMIS
ANASTASIA STANECKI
KRYSSTEN TAPP
NICOLE VELASCO

Segment/Field/Story Producer
SHANI BLACK
DANA COOK
MARION CUNNINGHAM
LISA DESAI
AUTUMN DOERR
ADAM FLEISCHMACHER
TEKELLA FOSTER
ERICA LEARY
MEAGHAN MASCORRO
JADEN PAN
STEPPEN PHELPS
ANNA POLUSO
AMY PROCACCI
RONI SPITZER
CARRIE STETT
LOUR VOSILLA
ROBERT ZIMMERMAN

Production Coordinator
CHRISTOPHER BURKE
JACOB FORD
CHRISTIE KIVAN
CHRISTIN MIHELLE
BLAKE SMITH
JOHN WILLIAMS
EMILY WILLIAMSON

Post-Production
BRENDA ALVARADO
JEREMY BEIM
KATHY BLAKE
NATHANIEL CAROTA
NED DONNELLY
ROBERT EGAMI
DAVID FARLEY
KATIE HANING
PHILIP HARRELSON
NANCY HIRAMI
MARY KAY KELLY

Visual Effects
DANA BENNETT
GLORIA COHEN SHOMO
LUCIAN GORCZANSKI
SETH KLEINBERG
KAREY MALTZAHN
ERIKA MICKE
JULIA NEIGHLY
JARROD NESBIT
TERRON PRATT
ANIELA SIDORSKA
CAT THELIA

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CLEAN SWEEP FOR PRODUCERS MARK

July 11 marked a major milestone in the history of the PGA, as all six major studios signed on to implement the Producers Mark certification prior to this, three studios (Sony Pictures Entertainment’s Columbia Pictures and Screen Gems; Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation; Universal Pictures) had already signed agreements to include the certification mark of “p.g.a.” on their films. Joining them were Paramount Pictures, The Walt Disney Studios, and Warner Bros. Pictures.

As of this writing, there are already 50 films that carry the “p.g.a” mark, ranging from independent productions, to animated features, to studios’ summer tentpoles. The broad acceptance of the Producers Mark represents the capstone of many years of hard work devoted to developing a fair and efficient process for properly accrediting the men and women who actually did the work of a producer. Produced by offers its heartiest congratulations to Presidents Hawk Koch and Mark Gordon, past Presidents Kathleen Kennedy and Marshall Herskovitz, and National Executive Director Vance Van Petten, all of whom made crucial contributions to this Guild-wide effort.

For more information about how your film can carry the Producers Mark, visit producersmark.com to have your questions answered or to apply for certification.

PGA Election Results

We are pleased to report the results of the most recent PGA election for Council Delegates. Elected Delegates will serve three-year terms. Our warmest congratulations to all new and returning Delegates!

Producers Council Board of Delegates

BRUCE COHEN
JASON KATMIS
STEVEN LEVITAN
CARRA MENDELJOHN
ERIN O’MALLEY
LYDIA DEAN PILCHER
STEPHANE RAYNAUD
JENNIFER TODD

AP Council Board of Delegates

Associate Producer/Production Manager/Production Supervisor Category
TRACIE ARNOLD
SUSAN BELL
JETHRO ROTHIE-RUSHEL

Production Coordinator Category
JENNIFER HARE
CHRISTINE ZAVALA

New Media Council Board of Delegates

LIZ GAZZANO
BLAINE GRABOYES
JOHN HEINSEN
ANDREW HOFFMAN*
SORAHA KIM
KATE MCCALLUM
CRIS POPENOE
KRISTEN RUSSELL BOUSQUET
JULIA SCHULHOF

Segment/Field/Story Producer Category
KATHLEEN JONES GARRITY

Post-Production Category
MONICA DE ARMOND
GRAHAM STUMPF

*Elected to a two-year term in lieu of departing Delegate T.Q. Jefferson

by Peter Fagan

I came into producing in Chicago. A great city with a robust film community, Chicago proved to be a breeding ground for people well suited to the long hours and overall hearty constitutions needed to persevere in the entertainment industry. Another of the city’s virtues is the size of its market, allowing the opportunity to jump from a feature film to an episodic TV series, or from a commercial to a music video or anything else in between.

Nowadays, in Los Angeles, where shooting a massive live event like the Electric Daisy Carnival (350K attendees, 40 cameras) or an immersive entertainment experience like “Why So Serious?” to complement The Dark Knight, my sensibility is still informed by the “producing is producing is producing” ethos. I love it all; bring it on!

I first heard about the PGA while working on an interactive project under the guidance of John Ziffren, a revered and accomplished producer and avid supporter of the Guild. With John as my sponsor, I jumped into the Guild’s offerings with enthusiasm, including the Mentoring Program. With guidance from Committee Chair Jill Denby Guest, I began considering thinking how the right mentor could help me to take my skills in the interactive world and live-action space and combine them to create social programming with mass appeal.

After an interview, I was paired with mentor David Eilenberg, who at the time was Head of Programming for Mark Burnett. Wow! It felt like I had won the lottery. I wanted to be prepared. There are certain times in your life when you just know in your bones meeting a particular individual could change the course of your career and I knew this was exactly such an opportunity.

David and I met at his office. (Whatever possessed me to create a PowerPoint presentation for our first meet and greet, only the gods know!) I spoke for 20 minutes straight, even standing up for emphasis at one point. My “talk” as it were, related to my experiences in alternate reality gaming, what I had learned about building communities and how all this might apply to the future of social television.

David listened without pause and then, like an eloquent sensei, prodded, guided and pushed me to think about things I had not before. I was won over by David’s kind and generous nature, and he graciously offered to introduce me to kindred spirits he knew in my field. Similarly, his email replies to me arrived like clockwork, always at a particular time and day never more than one day later. After the program was over, when I actually did have a pilot offer from one of the networks for a social programming show I had written, I remembered how David had told me I could not find an appropriate agent to represent me.

My relationship with David, now the SVP of Unscripted for TBS/TNT, continues today. While writing, I invariably ask myself, “What would David think of this?” to help sharpen the work.

David’s consistency in communication impressed me so much that now, as a mentor myself, I strive to emulate him in working with new members of the program. The more one matures as a producer, the more one wants to give back. I look forward to someday sparking something in one of my mentees as David did in me.
Produced by

20 years ago I got the chance to work with my idol Valerie Harper. She was fun, completely accessible and did a terrific job pretending not to notice how star struck I was around her. It's one thing when you get to meet an idol. It's an entirely different experience when that idol treats you just like a friend. This cartoon is dedicated to an idol who treated me like a friend, Valerie Harper. -WM

I Met RHODA!

Ask me who my major role models were and I'll tell you Betty White, Sally Field, Susan Stroman, Lauren Bacall, and Katharine Ross. But most of all, I wanted to be Rhoda Morgenstern.

Well, recently I had the opportunity to meet and work with Valerie Harper. Valerie Harper spoke of Rhoda's funny, smart, from New York, and very likable. The only difference between us is that she was bright and I was her new best friend.

I had a bad day. It lasted 10 years.

Who are your role models?

I wondered what would happen if I actually had the opportunity to hang out with my three role models.

Would I really want to go to auditions or share dating horror stories over a pizza with Rhoda?

Hi, I'm your new, very shy, neighbor. Wendy.

'What? We wanna do tonight?'

Why are your role models your role models?

After I really thought about it, the idea of having two-dimensional characters kinda fell flat. So to speak.

'I think I'm gonna go home now.'