From the Executive Director

Door to Door

Going Green

New Year's Eve Goes Green

An interview with producer Diana Pokorny

PGA Desktop

AVID Media Composer v5.5

The Picture of Health

Real Steal

Content theft is everyone’s problem.

Animal Advocacy

PGA member Jonny Vasic heads up Animal Content in Entertainment.

Case Study: John Ziffren

“Ask not what your Guild can do for you…”

All Through the Night

From Twilight to Breaking Dawn
Wyck Godfrey keeps the fires burning.

Fashionably Early

How Samuel Goldwyn and Coco Chanel brought high fashion to Hollywood.

Digital 25

The 2011 honorees.

FEATURSES

OFFICIAL SELECTION

FESTIVAL DE CANNES

OFFICIAL SELECTION

SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL

OFFICIAL SELECTION

SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL

OFFICIAL SELECTION

TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Cover photo: Michael Q. Martin

DEPARTMENTS

6 From the Executive Director

Door to Door

48 Going Green

New Year’s Eve Goes Green

An interview with producer Diana Pokorny

50 PGA Desktop

AVID Media Composer v5.5

52 The Picture of Health

54 New Members

56 PGA Bulletin

58 Letter to the Editor

59 Member Benefits

60 Mentoring Matters

62 Sad But True Comix
Where did “Street Kings 2: Motor City” get treated like Royalty?

Shawn Hatosy and Ray Liotta

DETROIT
America's Production Playground

“Shooting in Detroit was like having my very own Hollywood back lot with art deco skyscrapers, industrial monoliths, turn-of-the-century mansions and limestone and marble ballrooms all to myself. The only thing better than the architecture were the talented and hard-working local cast and crew who made the experience deeply personal and everlasting”, according to Chris Fisher, Director of the 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment police drama, starring Ray Liotta and Shawn Hatosy.

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For independent producers and team members, jobs have always been a scarce commodity. We work in a competitive industry, one that makes increasingly daunting demands on its workers. When you factor in the dismal picture of the national jobs crisis, our members’ collective concern for their future employment prospects can start to feel pretty well-founded.

As a Guild, it’s our mandate to fight these trends, and to give our members advantages and avenues to employment that they sorely need. For years, we’ve done this in several ways, notably through networking events like our PGA Job Forums. But the past month has seen the start of a new PGA jobs campaign, based around our online database of member resumes and employment profiles.

When Hawk Koch and Mark Gordon were elected as PGA Presidents last June, they issued a challenge to the membership: Put 1,500 resumes on the PGA website, and we’ll pull out all the stops to promote our employment tools throughout the industry. It took a lot of work, including a tremendous amount of encouragement from the Presidents and our AP Council VP Jeffrey Lerner. But today, we stand at more than 1,600 resumes online, with more being added every week.

And true to form, our Presidents have been as good as their word. As of this writing, Hawk Koch and PGA Supervisor of Communications Chris Green have met with executives at Universal, Warner Bros., Disney and Sony, with more meetings to come. At these meetings, Hawk and Chris meet with heads of production, providing a quick tutorial on how they can use the PGA website for their specific staffing needs. As a group, the executives have been excited to learn about this new functionality and look forward to trying it out as a means of staffing their productions. Soon, our Vice President of Television, Hayma “Screech” Washington, will be making the rounds of the major networks and television production companies. We’ll also be following up with all of the executives we’ve met with to get feedback on the site and fine-tune it to their needs. Of course, the success of the system also depends on us — more of our nearly 4,800 members need to add their online resumes to the database, and those that have already posted them must regularly update their availability and skill sets.

Will the website be the “killer app” that reverses the employment trends for our producing community? I can’t say. What I can say is this: Our Guild is doing all it can to put our member base — with its incredible array of talents and areas of expertise — in front of the people who can hire them, even if we have to do it the old-fashioned way, going door-to-door.

The truth is — as anyone who’s pitched a passion project knows — being a salesman isn’t so hard, so long as you believe in what you’re selling. And there’s nothing that our officers, Board members and PGA staff believe in more than the skills and experience of the members of this Guild.
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The Millard House (La Miniatura), 1923. 4 bedrooms, 4 baths & acre of gardens. Mills Act / Tax Benefits.
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$3,600,000

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Plunge Landing – Telluride, Colorado
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LEONARD FELDMAN, ARCHITECT – New York
Modern icon with massive walls of glass. Kitchen has all stainless steel appliances, 3 BRs, 3 BAs & home office.
$1,249,000

GERALD HORN, F.A.I.A. – Manhattan Beach, CA
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Every Guild needs a secret weapon. The Producers Guild’s is John Ziffren. You will not find his name among the officers or National Board members listed in the masthead of this magazine. He does not appear in the Guild’s published list of committee chairs. But Ziffren’s fingerprints — no matter how hard he tries to erase them — can be found on many of the PGA’s major initiatives and programs over the past 10 years. From the renovation and vision of the PGA website, to the Guild’s Awards categories for television, to its long-term strategies for collective action and fundraising, his impact has been consistent, profound and — at his own request — rarely acknowledged. At this very moment, he is likely on set, wincing in pain at the thought of you reading this interview.

Even if Ziffren is not in pain right now, he’s almost certainly on set. After more than 30 years in the industry and almost a thousand hours of primetime programming, he’s earned a reputation as one of the finest producers of television working today, with a roster of involvements that includes everything from certified classics such as The Larry Sanders Show and The Golden Girls, to cult hits like NewsRadio and Parker Lewis Can’t Lose and the new hit series Switched at Birth. His professional path has taken him from the legendary Spelling/Goldberg Productions to the heyday of Brillstein-Grey Entertainment, to the Web entertainment company Z.com. Throughout these stops, he’s demonstrated equal skill in assembling cohesive production units, as well as the day-to-day responsibilities of producing a series.

For the last four years, Ziffren has executive-produced pilots and series for ABC Family, where this fall he is overseeing four of the network’s original series: Switched at Birth, Make It or Break It, Jane By Design and Melissa & Joey as well as their four pilots: Bunheads, Intercept, Baby Daddy and Village People. In the few spare moments that schedule allows, he can be found offering his expertise and perspective not only to the PGA, but the Television Academy and LA84 Foundation.

This is the 52nd in Produced by’s ongoing series of Case Studies of successful producers and their work. After considerable begging, editor Chris Green was invited to sit down with Ziffren in his offices at ProdCo, on the CBS Radford lot, for a discussion that included such topics as the increased need for communication in a vertically integrated network environment, the vitality of the PGA’s Produced By Conference, and how roller-blading skills can prove to be an invaluable production asset.
No one’s born a producer. So, how did you find your way into the job? When I was a kid, my uncle took me on set of the television series *Batman*. And I was just blown away. So as I was growing up, when I would see a TV show or movie shooting, I stopped and watched for hours. I was really fascinated by it. I got a job at a local movie theater when I was a teenager; it was one of those places where I would sell tickets, move down the counter, sell popcorn, go upstairs, run the movie. After people left, I would clean the theatre, and I would run the movies for myself as I was sweeping up. I really, really loved it.

Are there any films from that time that you remember seeing on the inside? I remember the week we had *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds*. The theatre had just gotten a new projection system. And I was just blown away. So as I was growing up, when I would see a TV show or movie shooting, I stopped and watched for hours. I was really fascinated by it. I got a job at a local movie theater when I was a teenager; it was one of those places where I would sell tickets, move down the counter, sell popcorn, go upstairs, run the movie. After people left, I would clean the theatre, and I would run the movies for myself as I was sweeping up. I really, really loved it.

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...continued

5 The Financial Interest and Syndication Rules (Fin-Syn) were regulations that prevented major broadcast networks from owning the programming that they aired in prime time. The Fin-Syn Rules were repealed in 1993.
“that’s the way it’s always been done,” I think are going to have a much harder time than folks who can really emphasize a new way of working.

When you talk about putting the pieces together, especially given the state of relative chaos you describe, a lot of people may have a hard time wrapping their head around that challenge. Given a problem in physical production, most good producers can break that problem down to its constituent parts and solve it. But the obstacles you’re talking about are almost existential ones. Primarily, it’s about understanding what the goal is. For instance, in the case of the company I’m at now, the clear mandate was to build a production unit that creates very high-quality programming at a price. This fall, I’m executive producing four series and four pilots, all very good shows with first-class production values and at a price point below that of our basic cable competition. The “win” is to have the showrunner feel that the final product beat the script and for the network, to have that product for one dollar under budget, that’s a bull’s-eye. If you know what your mandates are, then it’s a matter of being a really good communicator and a really good listener, and having the political savvy to understand, at the end of the day, what the real goals are. Everyone works for someone; even network presidents work for someone. They establish the creative and financial goals. Being a good producer means being able to articulate and evangelize those goals to the entire team. If you’re an effective communicator and you know what your tools are and you have the right people and there’s a degree of trust and communication, you’re on your way, whether it’s putting together a show or a company.

Just to help a reader get a concrete sense of what you’re talking about, can you recall a time when you came to recognize the true deliverable was not what you had anticipated?

For The Larry Sanders Show, Garry Shandling had an extraordinarily clear view of exactly what he wanted. And Brad Grey had a extraordinarily clear view, as Garry’s partner, of how to support that. It was very unusual that one person should have total autonomy, creatively, in terms of a show. So Garry wanted to have a show that looked like a movie, but was shot on a sitcom schedule. Since I worked in both multi- and single-camera production, I always believed that the number of cameras alone did not define how a show should look. If you have four cameras, it doesn’t have to mean a proscenium look. You can shoot a master and opposing coverage simultaneously if you have the right director and DP, and if it serves the vision of the show. We had a production designer who built a great set that enabled cameras to get into adequate positions to get all the coverage we needed. We had directors that were able to work in a way that embraced simultaneous coverage. So we created a 360-degree environment that was essentially pre-lit from above. There were always three camera operators, six when we shot the talk show stuff. And every scene was ideally one setup, Peter Smokler was the DP, and he really embraced creating a different production strategy. He and his operators could get any shot, anywhere. There were a lot of pillars and doors to provide cover, so when someone walked past a camera operator, the guy would dive behind it. Peter himself operated a camera. We couldn’t afford steadicams, but fortunately Peter knew how to roller blade. And so the dolly grip would just grab him by the belt and drag him around. So, the look of the show was unique, but because there was such clarity in what we were trying to do, when we had accomplished it, we were able to shoot an entire sin-
With designed by committee, you’re building a camel. It’s inherently involved in the creative process. Now, all of them are bright, and passionate, and care, and want to contribute — but when you have that many people involved in the creative process you’re building a camel [i.e., an incoherent project designed by committee]. With the shows I’m currently producing for ABC Family, I’m fortunate to have a situation where, again, there’s absolute clarity. I was brought in by Paul Lee and Kate Juergens, who have a very clear vision, as does their team, for exactly what they’re looking for. So, it’s much more akin to the old independent production company model. Decisions get made, and there is consistency. I think we all, as producers, go through the frustration of the “half-decision,” or the decision that waits until the last minute.

As a producer in that situation where there is involvement from perhaps more people than is all together necessary — do you consider it your job to deliver the camel? Or is it to shape the camel into something more coherent? Really, my job is to not let it get to that point. I have to make sure the right people have the right information at the right time to be able to make the right decision. So it is always about communication. When you have a lot of layers, it just requires more communication, more diligence, and more work in making sure that everyone has signed off. A producer’s goal is always to make sure that everyone has signed off. Our job is to get to that answer.

You’ve talked about communication — that’s been almost a constant throughout virtually every interview this magazine has done, that emphasis on communication. I think it’s the core challenge, because it requires a degree of honesty about who you are as a person and producer, what your strengths and weaknesses are. The Guild has 4,800 members, and we’re all crazy enough to think we actually want to be leaders. If you ask a lot of folks what they think they’re strong at and then ask people who work for them what their strengths are, those answers are probably different in a lot of cases. I think that degree of personal candor is a challenge. We need to be honest about reading ourselves and reading others relative to these projects.

What can we do as a Guild to foster that, to help members develop their skills, whether, communication, self-scrutiny or otherwise? I think the Guild’s Produced By Conference is visionary in its ability to address this in terms of the diversity of programming and skills it embraces. You can, in the course of a weekend, hear so many ideas about our business and see what new ideal really resonate with you. As PGA members, we’re the leaders in figuring out how to create content for all these platforms, and to do so within a business and creative model. And that’s an enormous challenge; it requires us to be very innovative, the entire membership. And that’s the challenge and opportunity facing our Guild members in the industry right now: How can we be that innovative and adaptable?

We’d like to think the Guild is helping in that regard. Jobs, benefits, and influence are, I think, the things that any member would hope the Guild could deliver. And if the Guild could deliver all three of those, then everyone in town would be a member, because they’re very hard to deliver. But I remember vividly, because I was a member of an organization called the American Association of Producers, the AAP. There were a few visionary folks involved with the AAP — Tim Gibbons, George Sunga, Jason Shubb, and others — and they led the decision to merge with the PGA. And it was a controversial decision. But these guys really understood the value and importance of being partners, being a community. Recently, The Producers Mark initiative is, I think, so visionary and potentially so valuable to the entire community. When you look at movie and it says “Starring,” “Directed by,” “Written by,” it’s very clear. The Producers Mark will help the audience and the industry understand who produced any given movie, and I think that will help our profession. Really, we all owe such a tremendous debt to Kathy Kennedy, Marshall Herskovitz, Hawk Koch and Mark Gordon, and Vance Van Petten for their leadership on this issue. Regarding jobs, obviously, if any of us had a magic wand, we’d have full employment. It’s unfortunately the same challenge our entire country is facing. But if the Guild helps our members become more facile, more nimble, more innovative, then...
we become the training ground for the producers of the next generation, for content across all media platforms. I think the potential is extraordinary, and I think the Producers Guild is in a unique position to be able to serve that mission. Benefits are obviously crucial and a very challenging thing that people far more informed than I are working on. But at the end of the day you want to be able to make money and have you and your family taken care of. I think it’s one of the reasons that it’s so important that we get as many people involved with the Guild as possible because it will help our ability to provide better benefits to all of us. Now is the time that we have to double down. It’s a twist on the John Kennedy quote. “Ask not what your Guild can do for you, but what you can do for your Guild.” forgive the paraphrase. I think that’s a hard lesson for all of us because we all want to be able simply to pay a membership fee and have that result in getting a job. We have to understand there’s sweat equity involved with getting that job. Part of it is knowing who you are. Part of it is building the skill set. Part of it is learning about how the industry is growing and where the opportunities are that match your skill set and increasing that skill set. These are places where the Guild can make a difference in someone’s career; you have to understand the resources of the Guild are limited, but the opportunity for the Guild to make a difference to all of us is limitless. In production, we all try to be disciplined and strategic. And I think that we all have to be similarly disciplined and focused, as well as willing to contribute our time and effort and insight into helping the Guild fully realize its potential, because if we do that, the Guild will serve us better.

I think a lot of producers respond to that notion of the Guild itself as a production. We talked a little bit about bringing people onto your production team; how do you approach recruiting new members for the PGA team? When I talk to people about being part of this group, a lot of it is about what their needs and desires are. Because frankly, if someone is interested in being a Guild member because they want to learn how to program a website, that’s probably a bad reason to join the Guild. If someone is interested in changing the industry, in networking and communicating with people who are going through similar challenges in today’s economy, then that’s a pretty easy pitch. So I think a lot of it is understanding what people are looking for and what will be helpful to their careers or their lives. Some people really enjoy participating in organizations that promote skill set and knowledge growth, and for this profession, there’s no better place to do that than the PGA. Because there’s no one else that can provide this for our profession. There’s no other organization that serves the production community, from the visionary motion picture producers that find a project and somehow get it to screen, to the folks in new media who go out and shoot a webisode. I mean, no one else does that. It’s also why I think our website has so much potential. Because I think if people were able to ask a question in a forum of professionals in our industry and know that within our membership, there is the answer to every single production question you could ever ask, that’s an amazing benefit. If I’m presented with a challenge and I have no idea how to approach it, I’ll call you guys, and say, “Who in the membership would be good with this, who knows about this?” And reach out to them to find out. That’s why I think innovation and reflection and mentoring are key and one of the reasons that I am having this conversation with you. It’s because I really want to promote the idea that this is a time for the membership to actually work hard to help themselves and to think about how we can grow. I try every day to mine new ideas and new strategies to find a way to do things better. And just because you have an idea doesn’t mean it’s a good idea. But some of them are, and a lot of them come from my co-workers and people in the Guild who have done things in certain ways that can be applied to content creation today. We’re always looking for how to solve the challenges better. Part of it is retraining ourselves. Part of it is retraining crew members. Part of it is technology. For a show where it’s appropriate, technology can facilitate a better creative for a better price. On one of our series, I used that same Larry Sanders model of multiple simultaneous cameras in a pre-lit 360-degree environment, but added the capacity of camera platforms to be able to dump straight into the AVID so we didn’t have to post-sync dailies at full res and output the online from the AVID. You have a technological platform that delivers a high-quality image with the capacity to follow that workflow through post.

When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change.
—Marcel Proust, Author

Register for tickets at sundance.org/festival
Wyck Godfrey started his career as a creative executive at New Line after graduating from Princeton with an English degree. A love of books, of reading in general, fueled a desire to have a career in storytelling. While at New Line, he worked on hits like *The Mask*, *Dumb and Dumber* and the *Nightmare on Elm Street* franchise before joining John Davis' Davis Entertainment, where he oversaw *Behind Enemy Lines*. In 2001, he was promoted to president of Davis Entertainment and produced such movies as *I, Robot*, *Alien vs. Predator* and *Eragon*.

In 2006, Godfrey left Davis Entertainment and partnered with his friend, former United Talent Agency partner Marty Bowen, to create their own production company, Temple Hill Entertainment. The company’s first project out of the gate was *The Nativity Story*, distributed by New Line and directed by Catherine Hardwicke. The small Christmas-themed movie went on to gross almost $40 million domestically.

When the duo had a project, *Dear John*, get pushed due to star Channing Tatum’s schedule, Hardwicke called and asked them to help produce the movie that she was currently working on, a little movie called *Twilight*. They agreed and when they arrived on set, they found a production that very much needed a helping hand.

“Our job was really to solve problems so that Catherine had all the tools available to her in order to make the movie that was in her head,” says Godfrey. The pair took over the operational aspects of the project and selected locations for scenes, cut scenes for which there were no resources, got things done. “Once you get through delivering everything on time for the first movie, your involvement expands on the next ones to become more and more creative from there, into the normal producing aspects of developing, casting, et cetera.”

*Twilight*, based on the books by Stephenie Meyer, went on to become, well … it’s tough to imagine a Venn diagram that includes holding this magazine and not knowing what the *Twilight* series is. To say that the numbers are astronomical is an understatement: *Twilight* opened November 2008 to a $70 million weekend. *New Moon* has grossed more than $700 million. Ditto with *Eclipse*, as in “ditto, another $700 million.”


So, having made both smaller films and several huge movies in his career, which now includes arguably the largest home-grown pop cultural phenomenon of our time, Godfrey is uniquely positioned to offer his perspective on the role of the producer in a multi-part, multi-platform franchise.

“The first rule of adapting a popular book is to satisfy the book’s readers, the core fans,” says Godfrey. “The second rule is to make a movie that is appealing to people who haven’t read the book.” For Godfrey, books are inherently an internal medium, while movies are a visual one. And so, while you can’t just do a scene-by-scene “shoot” of the book due to both time constraints and the transposition of mediums, the movie still must capture the spirit of the book.

“You have to have the iconic aspects of the book in the movie. For instance, for *Breaking Dawn*, it’s the feathers. When Edward and Bella make love for the first time, they totally destroy the bedroom, so that there are all these feathers just...
sort of drifting around the room. So of course, we had those in the movie and the fans loved it, they really keyed in on it.”

With the Twilight franchise, each film has had a different director (except Breaking Dawn, Parts 1 and 2, which were shot simultaneously). Godfrey notes, “With this new generation, the new becomes old very quickly. Changing the directors of each movie has really helped to keep the series alive, aesthetically.”

Having a different director each time gave Godfrey more than simply a fresh, eager creative team for each outing. With this method, the directors aren’t second-guessing, “Is this going to be better than the last one I did?” Instead, they’re thinking, “This is going to be the only one I’m going to do, so let’s give it everything we’ve got.” Changing directors also meant that he could pair the right director with the right book. “The director best able to handle the painful loneliness of New Moon is not necessarily the same one who can handle the jagged cliff edge scenes of newborn wolves wrestling in Eclipse,” notes Godfrey.

To Godfrey, a primary variable for a producer to control in a situation where each movie is so hotly anticipated is how much to give the fans in terms of new footage or other access, versus how to sustain appetite for the entire series. How do you regulate how much you give an audience that will essentially take whatever you put out there? While there is no one-size-fits-all answer, Godfrey’s feeling is that when the awareness is already great, it’s in the production’s best interest to pull back in order to build that anticipation.

The Twilight series isn’t the first to be made into a successful sequence of movies, but they are perhaps the first to hit the theaters with the full-force chatter of Facebook, Twitter and YouTube swirling around them. So what is the producers’ role in choreographing this confusing and ever-evolving orchestra?

“The biggest thing that you can do is to manage the movies, the music and the basic marketing of the movie,” says Godfrey. “Let the other stuff happen organically if it can. We have an incredibly sophisticated marketing team, but we’re not doing anything crazy with this. The most powerful new media things that have happened have been things that the fans have created themselves.”

Fans have used snippets of music and the trailer to remix their own trailers or scenes or even whole movies. “It’s been pretty neat to see what all the fans have made. Personally, I’m a big fan of The Hillywood Show, which has put together parodies of all the movies, and they’re great.” A quick perusal of YouTube reveals a plethora of fan creations of various quality.

“As a producer, you have to be persistent. It’s the number one attribute of a successful producer. When I get up in the morning, I know that I will probably hear 35 rejections before one person says yes. So, on a really basic level, if you want to be a producer, you have to really love to make movies.”

Twilight, made for only $30 million, did so well that it paved the way for larger budgets for each subsequent movie. This is a happy mirroring, notes Godfrey, of the structure of the books, which begins with a girl moving to a small Northwestern town and opens up into a worldwide conflict climaxing with a war between vampires. But this great problem to have — that of a successful movie leading to more resources — also presented challenges for producers. As Godfrey and Bowen were there from the Twilight days, it fell to them to remind or inform subsequent (and recall, different) creative teams how certain aspects of the storytelling were handled in previous installments so that the entire series, the gestalt of the whole project, would maintain a strong artistic congruity.

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Fans have used snippets of music and the trailer to remix their own trailers or scenes or even whole movies. “It’s been pretty neat to see what all the fans have made. Personally, I’m a big fan of The Hillywood Show, which has put together parodies of all the movies, and they’re great.” A quick perusal of YouTube reveals a plethora of fan creations of various quality.
Godfrey has previously been a part of larger movies (not to be named here) where a major, complementary video game was being rushed parallel to the movie production in order to give both the same release date. Almost invariably, suggests Godfrey, the game serves as a distraction that isn’t ready in time and doesn’t drive the main project. So, while it may be a great idea to offer fans a world that they can continue to live in after they leave the theater, hits in video games are as rare as hits in movies, so trying to do both at once is often doomed to failure. "With the social media or gaming, we’ve never gotten to the point that it was going to serve the brand as a whole, which is the point of doing anything like that,” says Godfrey. "We’re lucky that we have a lot of young actors who tweet a lot, so that, more than anything else, has given us a big presence online.”

Of course, a great thing about being a part of something that is as much a part of the zeitgeist as the Twilight series is the instant gratification. To that end, Godfrey definitely checks out the comments by fans after opening day. "I think it’s great how much people love what it is we’ve done. But of course, there’s always someone on the Internet who is furious about one little thing that they think you've done wrong. And there always will be. You can’t please everybody.”

So where does a producer go after having made five of the biggest movies of the decade? "I like the big spectacle movies with lots of action and special effects,” Godfrey states. "After all, my career got started with movies like Alien vs. Predator for John Davis.”

Godfrey has a love of the immersive. On the one hand, as the English degree and filmography rife with book adaptations indicate, he loves the immersive elements of books and reading. "One of the first things that I ask myself when looking at a new project is, ‘Do I want to spend two hours in this world?’” On the other hand, he relishes the immersive quality of making big spectacle movies on location, the more exotic the better. “Some of my favorite memories are going off to the jungle to make a movie for six months and the way that everyone bonds while you’re doing that is fantastic. You really become a crew family over the course of that. Making movies on location is a pretty great life.”

Where do Godfrey and his partner get their new material? Due to the fact that even a bad movie will move the needle significantly in the book world, publishers are frequently knocking on their door. They also develop their own material, especially with writers who have written projects that they want to direct. They have relationships with writers that they would like to help and they develop projects from articles.

Strategically, Godfrey and Bowen try to do things that aren’t being done, telling stories outside of the genre du jour. There’s a slew of movies that have already been made and that will come out in the near future that are drinking from the same stream as Twilight, but most will be viewed very poorly alongside the series.

Godfrey’s advice for the aspiring producer is pretty simple, and it’s something that he learned from John Davis: persistence. "As a producer, you have to be persistent. It’s the number one attribute of a successful producer. When I get up in the morning, I know that I will probably hear 35 rejections before one person says yes. So, on a really basic level, if you want to be a producer, you have to really love to make movies.

It’s really hard to find good material. It’s even harder to craft that material into a script that is ready to be made. It’s hard to get a budget, to get an actor attached, a studio to greenlight it and so on and so on. It’s incredibly hard at every phase and so you have to have that deep-seated love for the journey. “Because it can be a life of really really highs and really really lows, you personally have to learn to not let yourself get too high when things are up or too low when things are down. Try and stay in the moment, appreciate that you’re making movies for a living.”
Fashion has always played an important role in the film industry, from costume departments to red carpet pre-shows. It has also been utilized in marketing campaigns, with fans able to purchase officially licensed replicas. (Witness the recent *Glee* line of clothing at Macy’s department stores.) Yet in 1930, when producer Samuel Goldwyn approached Gabrielle “Coco” Chanel to design for his films, the strategy was still considered an innovative promotional tool.

Spurred by the question, "what do women want?" the collaboration sparked controversy because of Chanel’s brief, two-month stay in America followed by the merely middling box-office take of the three films which marked the partnership (*Palmy Days*, *The Greeks Had a Word for Them* and the Gloria Swanson vehicle *Tonight or Never*). Goldwyn himself may have overestimated the popularity which Chanel’s first American visit would inspire, and dealt with an increasingly critical Los Angeles press. Coming between two World Wars, the collaboration became the target of nationalistic zeal, which tried to emphasize local costume designers over the interloper Chanel. This was not a Hollywood which embraced French fashion (as it would in the 1950s with Hubert de Givenchy’s designs for Audrey Hepburn) but instead an industry focused on shaping popular domestic taste. Taken as a whole, the episode remains a fascinating historical case study in the challenges of creative collaboration, especially given the multi-faceted nature of the producer’s role in filmmaking.

By 1931, Goldwyn and Chanel were each at the top of their respective games. Each began their career during World War I and solidified their success in the 1920s — he as an independent producer and she as a leading fashion designer — before their paths brought them together. Hollywood itself was in the middle of a transition, moving from silent to sound pictures and quickly standardizing into a fixed structure where personnel were under contract to a single studio and work was streamlined à la the Ford factory system. The five major and three minor studios — MGM, Paramount, 20th Century Fox, Columbia, RKO, Universal, United Artists and Warner Bros. — were also looking for new ways to appeal to spectators, particularly women; as Variety reported in 1931, female spectators provided 65% of box-office intake.

The answer for many came with the single word: fashion. Most turned to studio-contracted costumers, but Goldwyn ventured into the world of couturiers. By this point in his career, he was no stranger to high-profile collaborations and business mergers, having overseen the formation of Paramount along with Jesse L. Lasky, Cecil B. DeMille and Arthur Friend, and given his name to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (a company in which he played no part). In 1931, Goldwyn was an independent producer whose Samuel Goldwyn Studios would release pictures first through United Artists and later through RKO.

Of course, Goldwyn didn’t just find a fashion designer to join him in Hollywood...
Chanel herself would reiterate this to the press, explaining that her trip was a preliminary tour of Hollywood and that she would not be designing during her stay. While Goldwyn could not have been pleased by this announcement, he had more immediate concerns; none of her interviews were reaching the West Coast. Following Chanel’s first American press conference, Farnol reported to Goldwyn that the event had been a success, but the producer quickly replied with much ire that “delighted everything went so well with so much Chanel reception however for your information none of newspapers here carried a line.” Thus, Chanel’s popular reception by the East Coast press was not duplicated in Los Angeles, the very city that Goldwyn hoped to impress. The discrepancy was alarming; without full publicity, the partnership would lose substantial value to him. Farnol quickly wired back that the Associated Press was to blame, in particular Hazel Reavis, the head of the women’s service. As Farnol explained, the reporter “hates [Chanel] like poison” which “explains animosity of your Paris Associated Press correspondent at time.”

Reavis may not be the only reason early reports of Chanel’s visit were minimal on the West Coast, considering the visit’s timing and the national mood. The period between the two World Wars found an America taken more by nationalism than globalism. For Hollywood costume designers, the 1930s was anticipated as a period when American fashion would overcome the French, which had been the arbiters of fashion since the 1850s. As MGMs designer Adrian explained in 1933, “Every Hollywood designer has had the experience of seeing one of his designs ignored when first flashed on the screen, and then a season or two later, become the vogue because it had the stamp of approval from Paris.” His sentiments are consistent with most of the Los Angeles coverage of Chanel's time in Hollywood, and reveals that while Goldwyn’s move may have been bold and innovative, it failed to account for the spirit of the period. In fact, Hollywood designs were slowly making claims on the popularity that couturiers like Chanel had enjoyed during the 1920s.

Grasping his dilemma, Goldwyn pivoted toward what he hoped was a solution: introducing Chanel to Hollywood’s crime de la crème, including Greta Garbo, Claudette Colbert and Fredric March, and even arranging a tea and luncheon to introduce her to the local press. But, the producer was once again frustrated by the results. In fact, the newly-appointed salon which Goldwyn had created both to appease his star designer and to show her off to the press only served to increase the journalists’ ire, as typified by Myra Nye’s “Society of Cinemaland” column in the Los Angeles Times. Nye opens with a backhanded compliment: “Chanel has proven that even an ordinary profession can be made into something alluring.” In characterizing couture as an “ordinary profession,” Nye relegates Chanel to the role of mere seamstress, a designation that would have enraged the proud designer. The column would go on to report on Chanel’s distaste for the newly-painted room before stating that “the well-dressed guests [Americans, of course] added the only beauty to the room.” In fact, the great expenditure lavished on the designer was made laughable by a cartoon published in the Los Angeles Times entitled “Sugar and Spice.” The panel featured a joke borrowed from an actual occurrence at the event, when a curious reporter overturned one of the knickknacks purchased for Chanel and, discovering the exorbitant price, declared that “maybe the tag was a movie prop.” Subsequent articles cited the tea and Chanel’s unhappiness with the entire function, all but painting the designer as an interloper on the Hollywood scene and Goldwyn as the producer forced to deal with her.

True to her word, Chanel left Hollywood two weeks later and returned to Paris on the understanding that she would design from her home. Gloria Swanson would make a personal visit to Chanel, while Chanel used models to create the gowns for Palmy Days and The Greeks Had a Word for Them. Her move back to Paris not only signified her autonomy within the partnership but also gave the press more with which to find fault. For example, Muriel Babcock’s “Chanel Visit Echoes Heard,” written for the Los Angeles Times, reads like the start of a horror film, or perhaps the return of a serialized villain: “Maybe you thought you heard the last in Hollywood of Milie. Gabrielle Chanel... she begins before recounting her brief interlude in the city. Though the appearance of the gowns generated excitement, the article makes it clear that Chanel remained distrustful of Hollywood to the point that she declared...“In fact, Chanel’s alleged declaration was part of Goldwyn’s publicity strategy, allowing only a select few to see the gowns before the films’ release. Consequently, Goldwyn could tout his films as the first glimpse of Chanel’s fall line.”
Gloria Swanson models a Chanel design from *Tonight or Never*.

(From the Collections of the Margaret Herrick Library; courtesy of the Mary Pickford Foundation)

Behind the scenes, however, Chanel and Goldwyn's relationship continued amicably throughout the summer, only plagued by minor difficulties. (One of Chanel's associates was making excessive salary demands.) On the 25th of June, her sketches arrived at the studio along with her employee Mme. Courtois, and Goldwyn telegraphed to express his excitement: "We all were thrilled with your sketches. You may depend on our giving Mme. Courtois every cooperation possible so that she can faithfully execute your ideas." He also adds his hopes that Chanel will do everything possible for Gloria Swanson, his biggest star at the time, subtly suggesting a degree of control over the partnership. But while the pair's official relationship was that of employer-employee, the whole of their correspondence reads with the polite cordiality of equal business partners, and their amiable correspondence would continue long after the collaboration had ended. A letter from Chanel kept in Goldwyn's file from 1937 notes: "I have not forgotten my voyage to Hollywood and how nice and helpful you have been." Whatever stress may have been created by the reception to Chanel's visit or the films themselves, the relationship proved strong and successful enough for the two to remain in friendly touch for years afterward.

Following the completion of the gowns, Chanel's role in the films began to fade and it fell to Goldwyn to combat the growing antagonism toward her through favorable press. Throughout the summer of 1931, Goldwyn excited interest toward her through "exclusive" photo spreads in Photograph, actor interviews commenting on the designer, and promotional campaigns that included tie-ins with major merchandisers. In fact, exhibitors could partner local department stores for Chanel window displays while stores could sell replica gowns. The photo spreads also played an important role, utilizing each film's stars as models for Chanel's designs, mimicking fashion spreads in their layouts. Posters for the films made it known that the gowns had been designed by "Chanel of Paris," and in some instances, directly addressed female spectators with slogans that emphasized the gowns' reception by other women; as one ad states, "Women rave over [Chanel Gowns! Airing months after press scrutiny around fashion and the female spectator, the three films represented the final element of Goldwyn's efforts to use high fashion as a marketing technique.

The results of his campaigns were mixed. Reviews singled out each film's costumes, often suggesting that the ladies would love them, but only *Palmy Days* was a box-office success, largely due to the popularity of the film's star, Eddie Cantor. *Both Tonight or Never* and *Greeks* quickly went through their first runs, in most cases, lasting only for one week, and received unfavorable reviews. Thus, while Chanel may have generated publicity and even piqued the interest of female spectators, her influence alone was insufficient to help either film achieve box-office success.

While the collaboration did not lead to the overwhelming popularity that Goldwyn hoped for his films, it unquestionably points the way to the success of other equally-famous partnerships between film and fashion (in particular Hepburn and Givenchy). Though the press painted the partnership in an increasingly unfavorable light, private correspondence reveals that the two considered their business arrangement to be a success, and the films' critics, while generally unflattering, noted the unique sensibility behind their couturiers. In later years, Chanel's distaste for the industry became well known; to biographer Edmonde Charles-Roux, she described Hollywood as "the Mont St. Michel of tit and tail." But Goldwyn, significantly, was never included in her criticism.

Though she never again worked with the American film industry, to label her visit as unsuccessful would be to take too narrow a view. Goldwyn and Chanel's collaboration was, ultimately, a partnership 20 years ahead of its time. Even despite its mixed results as a box-office draw and sensational treatment in the press, the collaboration broke new ground for the industry and paved the way for future cross-pollination between cinema and couture. While Goldwyn, at the time, was unable to prove his theory that women wanted to see high fashion on screen, you're seeing the high fashion as a marketing technique. From single services through the entire production process, The Studios at Paramount is your one-stop shop from development to post. Our experts produce in every department are committed to helping you create your projects on time and under budget. With almost a century of cutting-edge excellence under our belts, the Studios at Paramount continues to provide the finest production services. By combining your vision with our vast experience and trendsetting technology and talent, together, we can embark on a new phase of making history.

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WE’LL EXCEED YOUR EXPECTATIONS NOT YOUR BUDGET
PRODUCERS ARE FUTURE-ORIENTED PEOPLE. It comes with the territory. By virtue of their collective mandate for telling new kinds of stories to reach bigger and more diverse audiences, producers necessarily have to stay at the forefront of innovations in technology and new media.

The Producers Guild's New Media Council created the Digital 25 to point their peers in the right direction and recognize some of the most exciting developments in the contemporary media landscape. Below, you'll find the selection of individuals and teams who have, over the past year, done the most to drive such varied platforms as broadband production, games, visual effects, animation and mobile content. To learn more about this eclectic group of visionaries, innovators and producers, read on…

John Rubey
President
AEG Network LIVE
www.networklive.com

John Rubey brings more than 25 years of digital content and entertainment marketing experience to his position as President of AEG Network LIVE. Rubey is responsible for the overall vision, entertainment marketing, digital content development and execution of the company's strategic initiatives. He also oversees the filming and distribution of all AEG Network LIVE’s music festivals to leading content distributors, including Hulu, AOL BEBO, MySpace and others, in addition to festival and artist web and mobile sites.

Sangam Pant & Umesh Shulla
Auryn, Inc.
www.auryn.com

Auryn, Inc. is an award-winning Los Angeles-based start-up technology company founded by animation experts from Sony, DreamWorks and Disney. The company is a leader in digital publishing and storybook app creation for the iPad and other tablet devices through its proprietary technology platforms — including the new Auracle platform — and digital animation expertise. Winners of the first-ever Appy Award, two coveted Kirkus Review Stars, and a growing stable of notable authors and illustrators around the globe, Auryn is reinventing the book for the digital age in exciting ways.

Zach Galifianakis
Executive in Two Ferns
Funny or Die: Between Two Ferns

Between Two Ferns With Zach Galifianakis is an interview series on Funny or Die (www.funnyordie.com) that is hosted by actor Zach Galifianakis. Zach conducts interviews with popular celebrities between two potted ferns, on a show that’s filmed to resemble low-budget public-access television production. Zach maintains an awkward and sometimes antagonistic demeanor with his guests, asking them bizarre and inappropriate questions mixed with off-handed non sequiturs. The result is a offbeat, boundary-pushing meta-entertainment that represents an entirely new comic aesthetic.

Mike Chambers
Visual Effects Producer

Mike Chambers is an interview series on Funny or Die (www.funnyordie.com) that is hosted by actor Zach Galifianakis. Zach conducts interviews with popular celebrities between two potted ferns, on a show that’s filmed to resemble low-budget public-access television production. Zach maintains an awkward and sometimes antagonistic demeanor with his guests, asking them bizarre and inappropriate questions mixed with off-handed non sequiturs. The result is a offbeat, boundary-pushing meta-entertainment that represents an entirely new comic aesthetic.

Jon Kirchner
Chairman, CEO and President
DTS
www.dts.com

Jon Kirchner serves as Chairman, CEO and President of DTS, Inc., the leading provider of state-of-the-art audio technology to hundreds of millions of DTS-licensed consumer electronics products worldwide. DTS technology is the de facto audio format for Blu-ray disc, and is increasingly deployed in the digital delivery of movies and other forms of digital entertainment on a growing array of network-connected consumer devices. DTS technology is embedded in home theaters, car audio systems, PCs, game consoles, DVD players, televisions, digital media players, set-top boxes, smartphones, surround music software and every device capable of playing Blu-ray discs.

Michael Fleischman & Deb Roy, Ph.D.
Co-founder and CEO (Roy)
Co-founder; President and CTO (Fleischman)
Bluefin Labs
www.bluefinlabs.com

Bluefin Labs provides first-of-its-kind metrics to aid brands and agencies in understanding audiences on a level more personal and in-depth than before.

Deb Roy and Michael Fleischman have coalesced their groundbreaking MIT Media Lab research on modeling human behavior through massive data sets to create Bluefin Signals, a tool that can draw insights from audiences in social media to analyze feedback loops. Through this research, Bluefin Labs provides first-of-its-kind metrics to aid brands and agencies in understanding audiences on a level more personal and in-depth than before.

Meyer Shwarzstein
CEO
Brainstorm Media
www.brainmedia.net

A pioneer in advocating the presence of independent films and docs on VOD and digital platforms, Meyer is arguably the first truly independent film and documentary distributor to obtain direct deals across the digital spectrum. Meyer has made direct deals with InDemand, DISH, DIRECTV, AT&T, Amazon, YouTube, Hulu, Blockbuster.com and many others.

Michael Fleischman & Deb Roy, Ph.D.
Co-founder and CEO (Roy)
Co-founder; President and CTO (Fleischman)
Bluefin Labs
www.bluefinlabs.com

On the list below, you’ll find entrepreneurs and activists, executives and artisans, celebrities and CEOs. They all share one common feature: a vision for expanding the creative possibilities available to our industry. The Producers Guild honored this select group at a special dinner and reception hosted by Variety and Digital Hollywood at the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Marina Del Rey on October 17. With newly-minted Producers Guild member Illeana Douglas serving as master of ceremonies, the PGA was proud to honor these leaders in such varied platforms as broadband production, games, visual effects, animation and mobile content. To learn more about this eclectic group of visionaries, innovators and producers, read on…
sharing sites. Funny or Die currently has numerous TV shows and feature-length properties in various stages of development and production.

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Asi Burak
Co-president
Games for Change
asiburak.com

The leading global force in supporting and developing digital games that have positive social impact, Games for Change (G4C) collectively involves game developers, governmental agencies, non-profits, and social impact leaders. Games for Change is a pioneering platform that leads to the creation of innovative games that are aimed to make the upcoming generation aware of issues such as human rights, current events, poverty, civics, genocide, and more. Asi created the best known game in the G4C genre, the award-winning digital game Peace Maker, a platform that enabled Palestinian and Israeli children to negotiate peace by playing national leaders.

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Nolan Gallagher
 Founder and CEO
Gravitas Ventures
www.gravitasventures.com

Nolan Gallagher is CEO of Gravitas Ventures, which he founded in 2006. Under Nolan’s leadership, Gravitas has released more than 1,000 films on Video-on-Demand (VOD). Through its relationships with studios and VOD operators, Gravitas can distribute a film into more than 100 million North American homes. Previously, Nolan worked in corporate marketing roles at companies that include Comcast, Warner Bros., and General Cinema Theatres.

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Zooey Deschanel, Molly McAleer & Sophia Rossi
Co-founder (Deschanel)
Co-founder and Producer (Rossi)
Hello Giggles
hello.giggles.com

Founded by actress/musician Zooey Deschanel, producer Sophia Rossi and writer Molly McAleer, Hello Giggles is an entertainment destination for smart, independent and creative women focused on creating an online environment in which women of today’s young generation can interact, discuss, and relate with each other in a way that strengthens the overall community — no matter the gender.

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Leigh Blake & Alicia Keys
Co-founders
Keep a Child Alive
keepachildalive.org

Leigh Blake and Alicia Keys, co-founders of Keep a Child Alive, are the A-listers behind the ‘Digital Death’ campaign for World AIDS Day, hoping to raise $1 million to help those suffering from HIV/AIDS in Africa and India. The unique campaign drafted a cadre of influential music industry figures, whose aggregate Twitter following represented more than 33 million followers — ironically, the same figure as those currently living with HIV in the world. The highly active artist roster (on Twitter/Facebook) that would sacrifice their digital lives for Keep a Child Alive to force attention toward the millions of people actually dying in Africa and India. Artists involved in the campaign included Lady Gaga, Justin Timberlake, Ryan Seacrest, Serena Williams, Usher, Jennifer Hudson, and many others.

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Perry Chen/Yancey Strickler
Co-founders
Kickstarter
www.kickstarter.com

Kickstarter is the world’s largest funding platform for creative projects. Kickstarter enables a community numbering tens of thousands of people to pledge millions of dollars and help realize creative projects from the worlds of music, film, art, technology, design, food, publishing and other creative fields. The Kickstarter community features projects by Oscar winners, Grammy winners, TED Fellows, The New York Times best-sellers, Pulitzer Prize finalists, and

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We started our digital division in 2001, when we modified our Sony F900 cameras to be film-friendly, capable of quick lens changes, consistent focus in varying temperatures, etc. Then we worked closely with manufacturers to ensure that ergonomics of their products would be optimized for camera crews with a film background. Today, our digital inventory has expanded to include Arri D-21, Sony F335 and F35, Iconix, Panasonic, Red cameras and the amazing high speed Weiscam. All supported with the latest in monitoring and DI control equipment.

Our goal is to provide outstanding service 24/7. Feel free to call or drop by anytime and let us show you how we can take care of you and your project.

Some rental houses are film and others are digital. We strive to be the best of both. Our roots are in film. Over the past 30 years we have steadily expanded our inventory to include a vast variety of 35mm and 16mm film cameras.

These are coupled with the industry’s widest selection of specialty and standard lenses to give cinematographers the ability to maximize their creativity. Much attention has been focused on 3-perforation and now 2-perf cameras because of their economic benefits. Our Moviecam SL MK2 (tri-perf) is one stellar example, and we’ve recently introduced our 2-perf Arricams and 35 BL4 cameras. You want it; we probably have it.

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Andree Martin
VP Technical Services
Andree.martin@clairomont.com

We are your one stop shop.
thousands of others. Based in New York City, Kickstarter is open to creative projects big and small, serious and whimsical, traditional and avant-garde.

Felicia Day
Knights of Good Productions
www.watchtheguild.com

Widely recognized as the pioneer of successful, repeatable Web series production, Felicia Day’s The Guild helped develop a new business model for digital programmers. One of the few profitable shows on the Web, The Guild leverages traditional windowing strategy with new media audience engagement. The Guild distribution partners currently include XBOX, MSN, Amazon, iTunes, Hulu, Netflix, Dark Horse Comics and DVD sales through major retailers including Best Buy and Barnes & Noble.

Troy Carter & Lady Gaga
LadyGaga.com

Lady Gaga and her management team exemplify execution and influence across platforms (Zynga/GagaVille, Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, Amazon, iTunes, television and more), bridging traditional media and technology. The term “Lady Gaga Effect” is now used to describe how entities create value-added digital products or services to enhance a brand’s engagement with fans.

Lisa Roth
Majesco Entertainment
www.majescoentertainment.com

Lisa Roth leads the creation and production of innovative motion-sensing console games, specializing in the area of active gaming. She was one of the producers for MTV Games’ Dance Central, the critically acclaimed game on Kinect™ for XBOX 360®. and is now producing Majesco Entertainment’s Zumba® Fitness console games and other titles that will, literally, get players off their couches.

Susan Margolin & Steve Savage
Co-presidents
New Video
www.newvideo.com

New Video’s innovation in digital content distribution have helped provide indie producers with a footprint that was previously only available to major studios. As co-presidents of New Video, Susan Margolin and Steve Savage have transformed an old-line packaged goods home entertainment distributor into the largest digital distributor of independent content in North America and an alternative model for a 21st-century distribution company. Under their leadership, the company was selected in 2006 as the sole content aggregator for iTunes’ feature film and TV initiative, and is currently one of four authorized Apple aggregators worldwide. With more than 30 key digital distribution outlets in nearly 15 territories worldwide in all digital channels (EST, VOD, subscription and ad-supported), the company now distributes 5,550 feature films and 7,500 hours of television for more than 400 companies.

Sharon Calahan
Director of Photography
Pixar Animation Studios
www.pixar.com

Sharon Calahan, Director of Photography at Pixar Animation Studios and on the recent release Cars 2, maintains Pixar’s trademark visual brilliance. Sharon has contributed to the art and technology of computer animation lighting since the earliest days of feature computer animation, with her work on Toy Story in 1995. Sharon has helped develop proprietary software that provides Pixar with what is widely recognized as the gold standard of quality for digital lighting.

Peter Vesterbacka
CEO and Producer
Rovio/Angry Birds
www.rovio.com

Peter Vesterbacka, the “Mighty Eagle of Rovio,” is the CEO of Rovio, the producer of Angry Birds, the most popular (and addictive) mobile game ever. The game, on iPhone and Android smartphones, has more than 100 million downloads, and 80% of users keep the app installed. During the...
2010 holidays, a record of a million downloads a day was set. More than 200 million minutes per day are spent playing the game, which has become a franchise unto itself.

John Calkins
Executive Vice President, Global Digital and Commercial Innovation
Sony Pictures Home Entertainment
www.sonypictures.com/homevideo

John Calkins is Executive Vice President, Global Digital and Commercial Innovation for Sony Pictures Home Entertainment (SPHE), and responsible for the digital transactional exploitation of SPHE’s film and television properties around the world, as well as developing and helping to implement an integrated approach to the home entertainment market across both digital and physical channels of distribution. John is heavily involved in the roll-out of the ultraviolet standard for digital content protection. Recently, he led the development of the industry’s first digital movie card, with VUDU, at Walmart Stores with the release of Battle: Los Angeles.

Ken Ralston
Visual Effects Supervisor
Sony Pictures Imageworks
www.imageworks.com

As the creative head of Sony Pictures Imageworks, Ken Ralston has been both an influential and inspirational figure for digital artists for the past 17 years. His ingenuity and digital artistry have pushed the boundaries of imagination to help filmmakers realize remarkable stories in uncanny visual ways. He earned his eighth Academy Award nomination in January, 2011 for his work on Tim Burton’s Alice in Wonderland, leading a team of more than 350 artists to deliver Burton’s vision of Lewis Carroll’s novel to the screen.

Nicole Skogg
Founder and CEO
SpyderLynk
www.spyderlynk.com

As Founder and CEO of SpyderLynk, Nicole created the SnapTag, a branded mobile bar code technology that allows any brand/producer to deliver content from practically any type of media onto mobile devices. SnapTags are unique in that they use logos as the trigger, so that no app is required in order for content to be activated via any camera phone. The SnapTag utilizes a proprietary smart back-end platform to deliver the right content at the right time. Warner Bros. utilized SnapTags across multiple media channels for their Inception movie campaign, placing branded TOTEM SnapTags on TV commercials, Facebook, DVD packaging, print ads, banners, websites, and delivering unique exclusive videos and other content from director Christopher Nolan. Other clients include Bud Light, Coke, Toyota, Office Depot, Wrigley, Sony Pictures and MillerCoors.

Thierry Coup, Chip Largman, Dale Mason & Mark Woodbury
Universal Creative
media.universalorlando.com

Universal Creative is the preeminent special venue division of any major entertainment company. Working with Universal Parks & Resorts, the Universal Creative team conceptualizes, designs and develops attractions, rides and shows, theme parks, hotels and resorts, location-based entertainment venues, restaurants, retail shops and international project development for Universal Studios, Inc. The team’s accomplishments include The Wizarding World of Harry Potter, King Kong 360 3-D, Universal’s parks in Orlando, Hollywood, Japan, and Singapore, The Amazing Adventures of Spider-Man, The Simpsons Ride, Shrek 4-D, Revenge of the Mummy and The Incredible Hulk.

Joe Letteri
Director
Weta Digital
www.wetafx.co.nz

Four-time Academy Award–winning special effects producer Joe Letteri is the current Director of Weta Digital, having joined the company in 2001. His credits include Rise of the Planet of the Apes, Avatar and The Lord of the Rings. He is widely acclaimed for helping transform the way special effects production is done in the 21st century and has helped make Weta Digital one of the premier destinations for special effects artistry.
Producing a project is always an inherently risky proposition. Every film or television show produced represents untold hours of a producer’s time: planning, negotiating, overseeing the production, marketing and distribution of the project. In fact, bringing a project from inception to the day when it actually reaches the market can take years of a producer’s creativity, energy and passion. And while the resulting box office or ratings may be good or bad — there’s never a guarantee — there is one thing a producer can count on with almost complete certainty: that movie or television show will be stolen by content thieves, often within hours of release.

In fact, on a recent visit on a Monday to an illegal website, or “rogue” site as they’re called, current box-office hits such as The Help and Rise of the Planet of the Apes were being offered as well as Colombiana and Spy Kids 4, which had just only opened that weekend. And television shows were well represented with 30 Rock and Desperate Housewives, just two of the many titles available.

The damage done is substantial. The Hurt Locker is just one example, but it’s a powerful one: 7 million illegal downloads of the Academy Award-winning movie occurred on BitTorrent in 2010. The Hurt Locker was viewed at the box office around the world by 6 million people in total. And the 2010 Academy Award-nominated movie 127 Hours was viewed by 9.4 million people at the box office around the world, but had 6.6 million illegal downloads on BitTorrent and other key peer-to-peer applications through August of 2011.

And the demand for illegally pirated television shows is equally strong: In 2010, Lost became the most illegally downloaded TV show with 5,940,000 illegal downloads, a dubious distinction that in 2011 went to How I Met Your Mother.

The effects of content theft are not just felt at the time of release, but on DVD and Internet sales, syndication, rentals, in fact, all downstream revenues. Pension and health benefits are also negatively affected. Perhaps most destructive from a producer’s point of view is the fact that the revenue lost to content theft means less money available to invest in new productions — and less incentive to take risks in doing so. The box-office revenues lost to the content theft of The Hurt Locker and 127 Hours could have been used to invest in other productions, which in turn would mean more jobs across the industry (see sidebar, page 42).

In fact, content theft has already cost the U.S. economy over tens of thousands of jobs and $3.5 billion in lost earnings.

The facts around content theft are sobering. Nearly 25% of all global Internet bandwidth is consumed by illegal downloading and streaming of movies and television shows. Every day, more than half a million movies are distributed illegally; TV shows are illegally streamed and downloaded millions of times each week. And websites trafficking in stolen film and TV content get 150,000 visits every day, more than 50 billion searches a year.

Content theft is often referred to as “piracy.” But the terms “piracy” and “pirates” conjure up images of swashbuckling anti-heroes. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Distribution of these stolen works is accomplished by sophisticated thieves who work together to camcorder a film in a theater or piller marketing DVDs before theatrical release. They encode the digital copy with soundtrack in all languages and then get the content to the rogue sites which specialize in illegal distribution. It’s not just file-sharing on P2P networks like BitTorrent anymore. Increasingly, content theft is enabled by commercial websites providing streaming and downloading to users on a global basis. These rogue sites are built specifically to traffic in film and TV content, to incentivize consumption of that content and to make it easy to consume that content. These commercial operators, often criminal operations, make a profit off of the transactions (the cost of business is not high after all), often to the tune of millions of dollars. These are sophisticated sites that are designed to fool the consumer into thinking they’re legitimate. They accept major forms of payment such as PayPal, Mastercard and Visa. They carry ads from legitimate businesses which are often unaware that their ads have been placed there. Some of these sites even offer users cash rewards for uploading popular content. And in addition to offering stolen content, they pose a risk to the consumer of spyware, malware, viruses, inappropriate content and in many cases, identity theft and credit card fraud.

And these sites are very easy to find and to access. In fact, if you type “wat” into Google search, it auto-fills “watch movies” and the top results you will see are mostly illegal pirate sites. Likewise, if you type “stream” into Google search, it auto-fills “stream movies” and again, the top results are mostly illegal sites.

The Department of Homeland Security’s U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the government agency tasked with protecting American intellectual property. While it has targeted these content thieves and is shutting down an increasing number of these sites, many of these operate overseas, beyond the reach of U.S. law.

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But as dire as the situation seems, there are ways that producers can act to protect their hard work and investment. Recently, an unprecedented coalition of studios, networks, labor, and civil rights organizations called Creative America, a national organization with the mission as one of educating and mobilizing its members into contacting their legislative representatives directly to demand tougher laws and stricter policies from the government when it comes to dealing with this crime. One current example, Nugent notes, is the PROTECT IP Act, currently under consideration by the U.S. Senate. This law would authorize the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to take action against foreign sites directed at the United States that are dedicated to trafficking illegally in stolen content. Once a court order has been obtained, the law would allow for DOJ and content owners to obtain court orders requiring third parties in the U.S. — such as Internet service providers (ISPs), search engines, payment processors and advertisers — to stop supporting such illegal sites.

Creative America Executive Director Mike Nugent sees a primary part of the organization’s mission as one of education.

“Within our own industry,” Nugent says, “people are often unaware of how big a problem content theft is and how it directly impacts their jobs and their ability to make a living doing what they love. And when people learn the facts, it serves as a strong motivation to take action.” Nugent sees an important leadership role for producers in the campaign against content theft.

Perhaps the most important thing producers can do to fight content theft is to learn more about the problem and then to educate themselves and everyone involved in their production. Blog, email, Twitter and Facebook about content theft. And of course, join Creative America.”

Through its website, Creativeamerica.org, the organization seeks not only to educate but to mobilize its members into contacting their legislative representatives directly to demand tougher laws and stricter policies from the government when it comes to dealing with this crime. One current example, Nugent notes, is the PROTECT IP Act, currently under consideration by the U.S. Senate. This law would authorize the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to take action against foreign sites directed at the United States that are dedicated to trafficking illegally in stolen content. Once a court order has been obtained, the law would allow for DOJ and content owners to obtain court orders requiring third parties in the U.S. — such as Internet service providers (ISPs), search engines, payment processors and advertisers — to stop supporting such illegal sites.

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“It’s a critical piece of legislation that is needed to give the Justice Department the tools they require to shut down these illegal websites that are operating overseas,” Nugent said.

The House of Representatives is considering introducing similar legislation. Another example of the kind of legislation Creative America is tracking and supporting is the Commercial Felony Streaming Act, which will change illegal streaming of films and television shows from a misdemeanor to a felony to bring it in line with illegal downloading.

“It’s important that producers and others in the industry join Creative America so that they can be kept informed when such legislation is introduced in Congress. They should go to the website now and use it to contact their representatives to show support for the PROTECT IP Act and other important legislation. They need to have a say in protecting their future.”

But Nugent sees a role for Creative America that goes well beyond any one piece of legislation.

“The piracy landscape is continuously evolving,” he notes, “and laws and law enforcement will need to adapt to these changes. There will always be a need for an organization like ours to make sure the industry is aware of the latest facts and what action is needed.”

Since its launch in July, Nugent says that he is “extremely encouraged and gratified” by the reaction within the industry to the new organization. “People are joining and engaging in the discussion. It’s gotten the conversation about content theft going — and that’s an important start.”

Craig Hoffman is the Communications Director for Creative America. Visit their website at www.creativeamerica.org to learn more about the organization and how you make your voice heard in the fight against content theft.

The film was illegally downloaded 7 million times on BitTorrent in 2010. Let’s imagine that only 25% of those people — 1.75 million — who illegally downloaded the film had spent $10 to see it legally in the theater. That represents revenue of $17.5 million. Let’s allocate 50% of those lost tickets to exhibitors (content theft affects them, too) which would leave $8.75 million that could be put toward the budget of other projects.

Who Gets Hurt?

What could the revenue lost to content theft mean to a producer? Let’s take The Hurt Locker as a hypothetical example.

The PGA, not being a labor union, doesn’t set minimum wages for members of the producing team. But if you’re a producing team member, consider your weekly rate. Take an educated guess as to those of your colleagues. You can do the math to figure out how many weeks you and your fellow members might have been employed if that $8.75 million had been put back into the industry. But unfortunately, none of those 7 million people paid a dime to watch The Hurt Locker. And that is money that will never be realized, recouped or reinvested.

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What could the revenue lost to content theft mean to a producer? Let’s take The Hurt Locker as a hypothetical example.

A producer could hire 72 screenwriters to write original screenplays for her next project at the high-end WGA minimum of $119,954.

Or she could hire 40 directors for 13 weeks apiece at the DGA minimum of $214,604.

For a 13-week shoot, at a weekly minimum rate of $2,300 (for an eight-hour day), she could hire 292 camera operators.

Or 184 directors of photography at the minimum rate of $3,650 per week.

It’s important that producers and others in the industry join Creative America so that they can be kept informed when such legislation is introduced in Congress. They should go to the website now and use it to contact their representatives to show support for the PROTECT IP Act and other important legislation. They need to have a say in protecting their future.”

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The Humane Society of the United States is the largest animal protection group in the country, with more than 11 million constituents; one out of every 28 Americans is an HSUS supporter. (They are not to be confused with the AHA, the American Humane Association, which goes on set and endorses the treatment of animals used in the making of film and television.) It’s unique that a non-profit has a program that is explicitly engaged in getting its agenda and issues out to the public through television and film. Vasic doesn’t know of any other group that does that.

For the episode mentioned above, Vasic was on location for the taping of A&E’s *Hoarders*, about a fellow who bred pet designer rats. The operation got out of control and he had 2,000 rats running freely all over his home. The HSUS team of 20–30 staff members and volunteers came in to corral the rats, triage and sex them (segregating the sexes so they couldn’t propagate any further), then adopt them out. The episode got a prime-time Emmy nomination. Vasic’s job? On set/on site liaison between the production company and the rescue team. Animal hoarding is surprisingly prevalent in this country. A&E’s *Hoarders* is the network’s number-one-rated show, and now A&E is working with Vasic in considering a specifically animal-related hoarding show.

ACE operates in a number of ways, whether it’s working one-on-one with documentary filmmakers, consulting with networks on shows that are already on the air, assisting production companies or writers on scripted shows, and more recently, consulting for numerous reality- and documentary-based shows.

“If you don’t know and can’t see what is actually going on, how are you going to alert more of the population to what is happening?” asks Vasic. "Besides all the good work that the many existing animal rights and watchdog groups are doing, they could never accomplish these results on their own. It’s going to take more awareness of what is occurring on the front lines in order to affect the necessary level of change."

Vasic has seen the success of “direct action” as part of the original team that got *Whale Wars* on the air. He served as an early consultant on that show, which not only made whaling an international issue again, but also helped increase donations to the non-profit Sea Shepherd by 1,000%. *Whale Wars* was Animal Planet’s number-one show for a couple of reasons, what Vasic considers a “win/win/win,” a victory for the network, the charity and the animals.

As another example, Animal Planet’s series *Confessions: Animals Hoarding* needed help on an episode where a woman had 150 dogs. The producers didn’t have the resources to confront the issue fully so they called in HSUS Animal Rescue Team to help get the animals out.

Jonny pitched and is now developing a show with the HSUS’s animal rescue team working with local law enforcement in investigating, raiding, and closing down breeders of fighting dogs. The Hollywood HSUS office is ready to dispatch a rescue team to address an animal cruelty issue anywhere in the country. They even have a CSI unit to do forensics to help collect data to help prosecute offenders.

Originally born in Los Angeles, moving to Salt Lake as a youth, Vasic studied film and television at the University of Utah. Once out of film school, Vasic worked in the Sundance Institute’s Salt Lake City office for several years. When he came back to Los Angeles, he worked PA jobs, eventually ascending through the ranks doing some art department work.


If you answered C) and/or D), you might be eight-year PGA member Jonny Vasic. Vasic runs the Animal Content in Entertainment (ACE) program for the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) out of their Hollywood office, with the mandate to get animal rights issues into television and film.
work, some transportation, eventually finding his way into the sound and camera departments, before UP’ing and performing producer duties on features and unscripted TV series. Between production gigs, he would volunteer with animal causes.

Volunteering on a campaign with Sea Shepherd to protect the harp seals in Canada, Vasic went to sea as chief cook. He then helped Sea Shepherd organize their media materials, creating reels and short videos. After forming their TV and film department, they shopped around a pitch reel but were rejected by every network. New footage from their documentary *At the Edge of the World* eventually helped Animal Planet decide to buy the series. Vasic worked as the liaison between the production company and Sea Shepherd, making sure that the TV show was accurate. He showed the production company how to shoot and live onboard a ship for months at a time. Vasic lived aboard a Sea Shepherd vessel, cumulatively, for about a year over a two- to three-year period.

After Sea Shepherd, Vasic formed his own production company, helping non-profits get their media message out. And that’s when the HSUS approached him.

Vasic’s latest effort with ACE is to increase awareness for the HSUS’s ACE Grant, which Vasic was instrumental in initiating, and each year grants $20,000 to a documentary (40 minutes or longer) that best presents an animal rights issue. Submissions are open now until November 1, and the prize is awarded December 4. Maybe more important than the prize money, ACE has lined up industry professionals like HBO, Animal Planet, Nat Geo Films, Documentary Channel to view the five finalists. Vasic says, “The ACE Grant helps filmmakers while simultaneously helping animals. What could be better than that?”

And for more than 25 years, the Hollywood HSUS office also has presented the annual Genesis Awards, which acknowledge media professionals that are leading the way in animal content. Vasic negotiated for the hour-long awards show to be broadcast on Animal Planet last March.

As a service to writers and producers, ACE will freely help research an issue and put together a dossier on any animal-related topic. For example, if a writer or producer has a character buying a dog, the ACE team would suggest it be written that the character instead adopts or rescues a dog. A modest change like that helps break the myths that an adopted dog is not as healthy as a purebred dog, hopefully reducing the number of unwanted dogs that unfortunately must be euthanized every year. (Vasic can’t imagine why anyone would “buy” a dog, even if they wanted a specific pure breed, as there are plenty of breed-specific rescue and adoption organizations all over the country.)

ACE will also provide experts for on-camera interviews. Vasic encourages producers to think of his office as a one-stop shop that can help with any animal-related issue or story. If they can’t immediately help, they are committed to steering a producer to the right person or organization. They also have stock footage available. Especially in the case of exotic animals, any use of stock footage whenever possible, reduces the possibility of another animal or group of animals being abused or exploited. Licensing rates for such footage are negotiable, even free in some instances.

ACE can be a big help when a film or TV show they support is slated for release or air, spreading the word through their fan base of 1.3 million with a “Humane Action Alert.” Their Facebook page has more than a million friends, and they have several hundred thousand Twitter followers. Their *All Animals* magazine has a circulation of more than 600,000.

The benefit of these efforts and exposure is an increased emphasis on animal issues. More than just having an animal in a show, this program encourages writers and producers to create meaningful stories around those animals. In closing, Vasic observes, “How we treat animals on this planet is indicative of how we treat each other as human beings.”

The HSUS Rescue Team on location with A&E’s *Hoarders*. (Photo: Jonny Vasic)
New Year’s Eve Goes Green
An Interview With Producer Diana Pokorny

When producer Diana Pokorny started working with Garry Marshall and the production team on the upcoming New Year’s Eve (release date: December 2011; Warner Bros.), they planned to make efforts keep the environmental impacts of their big-budget feature to a bare minimum. They had worked hard to learn how to “green up” a set on their last production together, Valentine’s Day. They’d made some great strides, learned a lot, but wanted to do even more.

For Pokorny, New Year’s Eve was to be her fourth green movie production, her third green movie with Warner Bros., and her second with Marshall, so she was looking forward to taking what she had learned and stepping up her green game on that set. The New Year’s Eve production team had the active support of both Warner Bros. and the New York City Mayors Office of Film and TV, and that was a big help. “The most important thing, I think, was the active, daily support of the studio, the city, the director and the team. Creatively, Garry would really go the distance — if he could throw even more.

Pokorny said that one important thing to remember is to start the green conversation early in pre-production — Week One, if possible — and to involve as many members of the team who are willing and able to engage in that ever-evolving discussion. “I think film crews are made up of very capable, creative, innovative people and we tried to get people to use their innovative talents to come up with more ways to green the set.

“I make sure to tell everybody from the get-go: we’re not just marking things off a green checklist, here — you know, the composting, the water bottles — we’re doing something more. We’re trying to change the culture, limit the way of what we can and should do, to minimize the negative environmental impacts of our productions.”

Pokorny gives a lot of credit to their green steward — Matt Landry — and also to Warner Bros., for mandating green stewards on all their sets. “They even allocate budget for a green steward now,” said Pokorny, marveling at this innovation with admiration. “Having a point person is key, someone to do the research, find out where to get the organic dyes, how to donate food from the location, even to stand by the recycling and composting bins, when there’s a minute after lunch, to answer questions about what goes where.

One initiative they ran throughout the production was the “Weekly Green Award.” Some productions do a weekly activity, like the Ten Dollar Bucket, but on New Year’s Eve, they had a weekly award for the crew member who brought the best green idea to the set that week. They had a little trophy — a miniature Empire State Building, painted green — and although it started out as a bit tongue-in-cheek, the team came to be excited as the production ensued to see who would win each week.

“One week, someone brought in 300 dead batteries from home to include in the production’s regular battery-recycling pickup,” recalled Pokorny, “and that won one week. That winning crew member got a big round of applause, so everyone could hear it and take note. After that, folks started bringing their dead batteries in from home, and it felt good to know that small piece of positive reinforcement had had some real impact.”

Marshall himself, on occasion, even acted like he was trying to win the Weekly Green Award. “Garry encouraged everyone to carpool to the set, and he did it himself. Sometimes you’d see him pull up, and he’d have visiting writers or other guests to the set, so seven or more people would pile out of his car — like one of those clown routines, with a dozen clowns in the tiny little car!” Other people on the team noticed when Marshall would do that and get the message. The way he gently made sure his “green” was visible to everyone on the team ensured that it would be as contagious as possible.

“It was sort of a joke,” laughed Pokorny, “but you know, a stunt like that does make people think about it a bit more than they might have, in the middle of a busy morning on the set.”

Matt Landry had experience as a green steward already, so he brought a lot to the table. “Having that person makes a huge difference,” says Pokorny. “They can talk to each department early in the process, find out what they need, do the research, follow back up with the department head — it’s labor-intensive, you need to have a lot of energy.”

“There’s no doubt that the green steward should be a standard position on every movie and TV production going forward,” insists Pokorny.

When it came time to do the carbon calculation (see PGA’s Carbon Calculator at www.greenproductionguide.com) as her production was nearing wrap, Pokorny said Landry was a tremendous help. He coordinated with the accounting department, the production department and the Warner Bros. green team to get it done. She believes the carbon calculator has been a positive addition to the production deliverables — even though it takes a bit of extra time, it clearly makes production team members notice their carbon footprint and think of ways to reduce it on the next production.

“Over the course of several years,” muses Pokorny, “we hope to gather these carbon calculations from different productions, compare and contrast them, and see how we’re improving. I think we’ll learn a lot from that.”

One of the other people on the team who brought a lot of green to the production was the first AD, Dave Venghaus. When asked to recall one anecdote which might represent the green legacy of his film production (like the story of how John Krasinski drove to the green set of Sam Mendes’ Away We Go in a Land Rover, but was spotted by producer Mari Jo Winkler the following year in a Prius), Pokorny laughed. “Here’s one thing that shifted in Hollywood after our movie,” she offered, and told the following story.

“In the safety meeting every morning on the New Year’s Eve set, after the safety details relating to the day’s schedule, Dave always reminded people about recycling and composting and all that. Then, he would end each meeting with the phrase, ‘Be Safe, Be Green!’ It was light, no big deal, and then everyone would rush off to work.”

Pokorny went on to describe how when Venghaus went on to his next production, he slipped one morning in their safety meeting. Instead of concluding the meeting with the standard phrase, just “Be Safe” as he’d been doing since that TV series started production, he blurted out the line from the New Year’s Eve set. Maybe he momentarily forgot which production he was on — he said “Be Safe, Be Green!” by mistake.

Everyone sort of laughed; again, no big deal.

“The following morning at their safety meeting, Dave wrapped up back in his usual fashion by saying, ‘Be Safe!’” relates Pokorny, as it was related to her. “But when he turned to leave, someone in the back of the room shouted: ‘Don’t you mean, ‘Be Safe, Be Green’?!’ The whole room laughed, but it had stuck. As a result, the catchphrase on that set was ‘Be Safe, Be Green!’ from that day forward and the crew started advocating for green practices on set.”

Diana Pokorny hopes that many members of her production teams will pass that line — and the overall message — forward to their next productions, too. She hopes that soon, all movie and TV productions will use that phrase, and live it, too. She knows wherever he is now, on his next movie, Garry Marshall is also doing his part.

“Garry wants a better world, and he has a young group of people he works with who move with him from production to production, and they all really embrace ‘green,’” says Pokorny. “I’m not sure if it’s just how he is or if it’s from his kids or his grandkids or his assistants or what, but he really lives it, and that trickles down to the whole team.”

Thank you, Garry, Diana, Dave, Matt, the green team at Warner Bros., and the rest of the New Year’s Eve revelers — you deserve major kudos for sending this important message out into the world this holiday season. Best of luck at the box office — I’m going to tell everyone I know to go opening weekend — twice, if possible!

—KATIE CARPENTER

Some members of the New Year’s Eve ensemble: Top: Katherine Heigl and Sofia Vergara Middle: Josh Duhamel Bottom: Jon Bon Jovi and Lea Michele
Media Composer v5.5

Reviewed by Derek Bartholomaus

Three months ago, this magazine asked if I would be interested in writing a review of the new AVID Media Composer v5.5 software. I said that I would be happy to do so and that it would be good timing because I was just about to start a show that was going to be using v5.5 for the first time. Recently, I wrapped that show and now I can write up my thoughts about it.

In late 2010, AVID released Version 5 of their Media Composer nonlinear editing software and it was a major upgrade. Many things changed that confused and upset some editors, but unlike another recently-upgraded editing software system, it was still basically the same system. Version 5.5 is a modest adjustment/upgrade of that software.

The best thing about the new software is that it comes with a full suite of post-production software applications. In addition to receiving Media Composer 5.5, you also receive Boris FX, Boris Continuum, Sonarson Squeeze, AVID DVD by Sonic, and Smartsound Sonicfire Pro. The Boris software bundles are the most important. AVID comes with a series of built-in visual effects, but pretty much all professional projects will need to use more than the built-in effects at some point. The two choices are Sapphire or Boris. Sapphire requires a license fee that has to be renewed every year in order to continue using the effects, whereas Boris is a one-time purchase. I remember having to order Boris as a separate software package in the past, so it was a very nice surprise to see it bundled with the Media Composer v5.5 software.

THE GOOD

AVID Media Composer v5.5 is a giant memory hog. If you have a two- or three-year-old computer that ran Media Composer v4 just fine, then it will not run v5.5 very well. It is not uncommon to have to wait several minutes for the project to save. You really need to be running v5.5 on hardware that is less than one year old in order to have it operate properly.

If your editor has only worked on Media Composer v4, then there will be a steep learning curve in using v5.5. In Version 5, AVID introduced the “Smart Tool.” This tool can be useful to new editors or editors transitioning from Final Cut Pro to Media Composer, but it changes the way that the timeline functions and it is not uncommon for experienced editors to accidentally switch editing modes without immediately realizing it and alter their sequence in unintentional ways. The “Smart Tool” cannot be disabled either, unlike other timeline tools.

THE ANNOYING

One of the major advantages in Media Composer v5.5 is supposed to be the way it can automatically recognize and import tapeless formats. However, it does this in what can be an extremely frustrating way. When connecting a drive that contains AVID Media Files or AVID Media Access (AMA) files, a new bin will be created in your currently-opened project that is the name of the drive. This bin will be able to play back the contained clips instantly. This is a good thing. But if the files are on a USB drive that you just wanted to copy the files off of, then the Media Composer creates that bin and there is no way to delete it. And every time that the USB drive is reconnected, whether or not any media files are on the drive any longer, that bin will open in your project. There really should be a way to disable the automatic bin creation. In the project that I just finished, one of the producers had an old Media Composer v3.5 project on his USB drive and when it was connected to the v5.5 computer, it crashed the computer. Automation can be good, but it should be adjustable.

CONCLUSION

On the whole I feel that AVID Media Composer v5.5 has more positives than negatives, but whether or not you decide to purchase it should really depend on how recent your computer hardware is. If you have to upgrade all of your hardware as well as your software, you may want to hold off until your hardware is up to date. If you install Media Composer v5.5 on older hardware, you will spend a lot of time cursing at how long things are taking. If you have current hardware and are able to take advantage of the cross-grade promotion, then there is no strong reason not to upgrade to Version 5.5.

Derek Bartholomaus is a freelance television post-production producer and represents the PGA of America’s Guild’s AP Council Board of Delegates. He is a very nice surprise to see it bundled
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 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 Plan: 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
New Members
The Producers Guild is proud to welcome the following new members, who have joined the Guild since August, 2011.

PRODUCERS COUNCIL

JOHN MURRAY
COLLEEN MILLER
MILES MILLAR
LEONARD McLEOD
MOLLY MAYEUX
TIMOTHY MARX
TABITHA LENTLE
JEFF KLEEMAN
MATT KAYE
CARLA KAUFMAN SLOAN
MICHAEL HISSRICH
SAM HILL
REBECCA HARRELL TICKELL
AL GOUGH
BELIT PAULISSIAN
PRINCESS OMAHONEY
TOLL FREE: 800 / 393-3833
PHONE: 323 / 462-6447
20 e. delaware place
Hollywood, CA 90038
FAX: 323 / 462-4411
Talbott Hotel
Chicago, IL 60611
FALL 2011
Toll Free: 800 / 393-3833
Phone: 323 / 462-6447
20 E. DELAWARE PLACE
Hollywood, CA 90038
Fax: 323 / 462-4411

Produced by Fall 2011
Fall 2011 Produced by 55
PGA Office on the Move

The rumors are true: The Producers Guild’s West Coast office has moved!

We haven’t moved far … just down the hall, in fact. You can now find your dedicated, hard-working and strikingly attractive Producers Guild staff in Suite 400 of 8530 Wilshire Boulevard, in Beverly Hills.

But a new digit in our suite number is the least of the changes that come with our new offices. Visitors will surely be dazzled by the handsome colors, abundance of wood grain, glass-walled conference room, and the existence of an actual reception area. The fact that full-time members of the staff are no longer crammed into supply rooms and spare corners of the office is just the icing on the cake. We hope you stop by soon!

PAY YOUR DUES:

• Unless you are current on your membership dues, you will not receive screeners.
• Several email notifications and letters were sent this summer alerting current and delinquent members to pay their dues. If you received this notice and haven’t paid your dues, please log in to your online account at www.producersguild.org in order to settle your dues.
• If you become current during the time screeners are being sent to the membership, you will begin receiving your screeners approximately 2-3 weeks after receipt of payment. You will not retroactively receive screeners that you may have missed due to delinquent payment.

CURRENT MAILING ADDRESS:

• The mailing lists used by the studios to send screeners are taken directly from the PGA database. You must have a current address listed in the PGA database in order to ensure that screeners are mailed to the correct location.
• The screener address you provide must:
  1. Be a location where an individual (does not have to be you) is physically present to sign for the delivery. FEDEX & UPS will not leave screeners at your door and they will return any undeliverable screeners to the sender.
  2. Be a STREET address, screeners will not be delivered to P.O. boxes.
• Please log in to your PGA online account to verify and update your address as needed.

CURRENT EMAIL ADDRESS:

• In order to ensure that you receive all notifications and updates concerning the screener awards season, you should ensure that you have a valid/current email address with the PGA.
• Please log in to your PGA online account to verify and update your email address as needed.

SIGNED SCREENER AGREEMENT:

• The Guild must have a signed screener agreement on file for each member. The agreement certifies that the member is aware of the legal responsibilities and restrictions that govern the receipt and possession of screeners.
• You only need to sign this form once during your PGA membership, so if you’ve submitted a screener agreement in the past, do not resubmit a new one for this year. You should have already been notified via email if we do not have a signed screener agreement on file for you.

CURRENT MAILING ADDRESS:

• The mailing lists used by the studios to send screeners are taken directly from the PGA database. You must have a current address listed in the PGA database in order to ensure that screeners are mailed to the correct location.
• The screener address you provide must:
  1. Be a location where an individual (does not have to be you) is physically present to sign for the delivery. FEDEX & UPS will not leave screeners at your door and they will return any undeliverable screeners to the sender.
  2. Be a STREET address, screeners will not be delivered to P.O. boxes.
• Please log in to your PGA online account to verify and update your address as needed.

NEW: With our new database capabilities, members are now able to maintain more than one address in their online account. This includes a primary address, business address and a SCREENER ADDRESS. If you haven’t already, please log in to your account through the PGA website and fill in your screener address. If you do not list a screener address, your primary address will serve as your screener address as well.

To update your screener address, follow these instructions:
1. Log in to the site with your username and password.
2. Go to any page of the site other than the home page.
3. On the right side is a gray box titled My Profile. Click on “Manage Profile” link.
4. Click on the “Edit Bio” icon under INFORMATION & SETTINGS section.
5. Scroll down to the section titled “Additional Information.” There you will see fields for your screener address. Complete those fields and click the “Save Changes” button at the bottom of the page.

As you may already know, the screeners are never sent directly from the PGA offices. All screeners are sent to you from mailing houses selected by the studios. Although we do everything we can to make sure you receive your screeners, occasional complications may occur. While we will help to resolve any oversights, the final responsibility for rectifying any issues lies with the studio.
Jobs Well Done

Every year, the PGA offers its Vanguard Award to an individual or group that has made an essential contribution to the use of technology and new media in entertainment. The late Steve Jobs was the very first recipient of that award, along with his colleagues John Lasseter and Ed Catmull. While Jobs was never a Producers Guild member, the impact he had on our industry is enormous. His passing inspired one member to reflect on his contributions, which we are happy to reprint here.

Dear Editor,

On October 5, the world lost one of the true giants of this or any era, when Apple co-founder Steve Jobs passed away at 56 of complications from pancreatic cancer. Jobs not only revolutionized the way the world communicates and works, his creative approach to a computing environment also served to inspire countless professionals in all walks of life and of practically every nationality. His devices and platforms aided people with disabilities, allowed us to share memories and experiences as never before, and truly made the world a smaller place, giving us access to people and events on a scale and in ways even he likely never expected.

As a result of his work, whole industries were changed, worlds were imagined and jobs were created, generating untold billions, nay trillions of dollars in revenue.

One major industry to embrace Jobs’ innovations: entertainment. For instance, without Jobs, there would likely be no Pixar as we’ve come to know it. Consider just that one example and then multiply it exponentially and you might come close to grasping the giant leap mankind took thanks to this visionary genius.

His products have profoundly impacted film and TV from development to the production office to locations to post-production and more... taking our industry literally (as a famous Pixar character once said) to infinity and beyond.

I remember, as do many of us who are just old enough, seeing some of the first Apple computers. Rudimentary by today’s standards, the evolution of faster processors and more memory inspired creative software designers to develop Mac applications and interfaces for everything from screenwriting to AVID editing, Pro Tools sound processing and mixing, Photoshop and Illustrator graphics, animation software and so much more.

You would think familiarity would breed a sort of contempt, that we’d treat these tools as we would a common stapler; yet we still marvel at what they let us accomplish.

The fact is that world leaders have come and gone without having left anywhere near as great a mark on the planet as Jobs and his team at Apple did during his tenure. Jobs’ legend and legacy is assured, and plans he left for the future will do much to ensure that his accomplishments don’t end with his passing.

The word “amazing” is grossly overused these days, but not when it comes to Jobs. Not even close.

Andy Gleize
Mammoth Lakes, CA
Post-Production/AP
For nearly 10 years, the PGA has sponsored a program that quietly changes people’s lives and improves their chances for success in this difficult profession. The twice-yearly Mentoring Program pairs an applicant who needs help in taking that next step in their career with a fellow PGA member who has volunteered to share some of their valuable time and expertise as a mentor. Friendships, jobs and projects have resulted from these pairings.

The Mentoring Committee plays matchmaker. Applicants write a short essay describing their goals and the Committee provided an experienced PGA mentor. In previous cycles, because applicants were unknown to the Committee members, the process was hit-or-miss; some pairs worked out well but others never got off the ground. The Committee wanted to improve the odds for a successful mentorship for every applicant.

This summer, at a meeting held in a Culver City garage, change came to the Mentoring Program.

The Committee gathered in the converted garage belonging to Meta Valentic, Co-chair, along with Jill Demby Guest, of the Mentoring Committee, to come up with ways of streamlining and improving the matchmaking process. Charles Howard, who chairs the PGA Diversity Program, shared with us how that program interviews more than 100 applicants in order to get a sense of where applicants are on their journey and who fits in best with their program.

Everybody agreed to give interviews a try. Committee member Steven Wolfe offered up his offices. On September 10, the Committee interviewed 50 fellow PGA members and the process was forever changed as the Mentoring Committee took a giant leap forward in its efforts to find the right mentor for the right mentee. The face-to-face contact proved to be an invaluable tool to hone what each applicant is looking for next in their careers.

Journalist Malcolm Gladwell writes that in a group or work setting, we have the capacity to take in about 150 people, learn their names and a little bit about them. In one day, we met 50 very bright, interesting, talented PGA members hungry for knowledge. Each one took the time to fill out the application and attend the interview. As a result, they will find themselves sharing time with a fellow member whom they probably otherwise would never have met.

Every Committee member walked away that Saturday excited that we had discovered a better way of doing things — and encouraged by the next crop of members who will make the Producers Guild a more potent force in this business that we love but that doesn’t always love us back. The PGA has nearly 5,000 interesting, talented members and a variety of different programs that help bind us together.

Get involved. It’s a win-win for everyone.

–STEVE ECCELSEINE
I am a movie producer.
I am a TV producer.
I am a real producer.
I am the only one with a future.
I produce brilliance for no money.
I produce web content.

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