

SMPTE/EBU TASK FORCE ON TIMING AND SYNCHRONIZATION

On September 12, 2007, the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers (SMPTE) and the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) announced the formation of a Joint Task Force on Timing and Synchronization to investigate a potentially major change in one of the key aspects of the broadcasting infrastructure – system timing and synchronization. The official announcement is as follows:



The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) and the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers (SMPTE) have announced the creation of a Joint Task Force to examine and standardize future needs for timing and synchronization in moving picture and related industries.

Lieven Vermaele, newly appointed Technical Director of EBU said, "The focus on user requirements is the key element to ensure new solutions that will meet the needs of our members and other organizations around the world."

Gavin Schutz, SMPTE Engineering Vice President, added that the partnership with EBU "has always been important and productive; we look forward to applying the talents of both organizations to these issues."

Current methods of timing and synchronization for television, audio and other moving picture signals rely on standards that have been in place for over 30 years. While these standards have proven to be robust solutions that served the industry well for some time, they are predicated on technologies that are becoming increasingly inappropriate for the digital age. For example, networked content sharing or higher frame rate HDTV image formats now impose unacceptable limitations for the future.

The task force will begin by focusing on user requirements. Based on the input to be received from broadcasters, the media and entertainment industries, the task force will publish one or more Requests for Technology (RFT). The industry's responses to these RFT will then be evaluated against the known user requirements. The outcome of this process will be a set of specifications and then passed to the appropriate SMPTE technology committees for due process standardization.

The task force will be chaired jointly by Dr. Hans Hoffmann of the EBU Technical Department, and Peter Symes, SMPTE Director of Standards & Engineering. It will adhere to an aggressive time schedule intended to publish the final specification by the end of 2008.

The task force will initially be open to all interested parties, but it is possible that membership may be restricted for later meetings to ensure the necessary focus.

The group will operate using a combination of face-to-face meetings and on-line discussions. The first face-to-face meeting will be held in New York City on November 5 & 6, 2007. No phone-in facilities will be provided and pre-registration is required for this meeting. More details, and links to the participation agreement and meeting registration are at:

http://www.smpte.org/standards/meeting_schedule/tf_home

The last SMPTE/EBU Task force in 1998 produced a major report on Harmonized Standards for the Exchange of Program Material as Bitstreams, which laid the foundations for the subsequent revolution in video production and distribution workflow technologies. That report is currently not on the SMPTE and EBU web sites, but may be found at:

http://www.bse.on.ca/productline%5CFiles%5CsmpteEBU_CompressionIssues.pdf

SMPTE Standards Action Newsletter

SMPTE has also recently announced the creation of a *Standards Action* newsletter. Peter Symes, the newly appointed SMPTE Director of Standards and Engineering, explained that SMPTE will use this newsletter to announce standards-related events such as new work items, requests for technology, surveys, new publications, etc. The official announcement says:

Standards Action is a free email newsletter, distributed not more than once per week, that is intended to inform all interested parties of developments in the SMPTE Standards activities. You should subscribe if:

- You use SMPTE Standards, Recommended Practices, and Engineering Guidelines, and need to know when new documents are published, or existing documents are revised or reaffirmed
- You are a manufacturer, service provider, or user in the moving image industry, and may be affected by SMPTE standardization activities
- You are interested in moving image technology and may wish to contribute to ongoing discussions

Standards Action is available to SMPTE members and non-members -- anyone potentially affected by, or just interested in, the work of SMPTE. To receive the newsletter, go to: http://www.smpte.org/standards/standards_action/ or send an email to: standards_action_subscribe@lists.smpte.org.

Last Call for Proposals Deadline October 5! 62nd Annual NAB Broadcast Engineering Conference



The NAB invites you to submit a proposal to present a technical paper at the NAB 62nd Annual NAB Broadcast Engineering Conference in Las Vegas, April 12- 17, 2008. We are seeking paper proposals on these specific topic areas:

Radio Engineering

Audio over IP
Digital Radio Opportunities
Digital Radio for Small Markets
New Technologies for Audience Measurement
Alternative STL Technologies
Radio Technology Advancements

Television Engineering

DTV Broadcasting for Mobile and Handheld
Lip Sync, Loudness and Multichannel
Digital Television Transition - 10 Months and Counting
HD News and Live Production

Radio and Television Engineering

Monitoring and Measurements in the Broadcast Plant
Engineering Management Panel (IT and Engineering, Recruiting and Training)
Bandwidth Management in the Broadcast Facility
Repurposing Content for Multiple Platforms
Next Generation Public Alerting
Emerging Broadcast Technologies

If you are interested in submitting a proposal, you may do so online at: <http://www.nabshow.com/2008/forms/bec.asp>. Remember the deadline is October 5, 2007. If you have any questions please call NAB Science & Technology at (202) 429-5346.

ATSC Digital Television VSB Fundamentals Seminars
Saturday, October 6, 2007 - KLCS-TV/KLCS-DT, Los Angeles, CA
Thursday, October 18, 2007 - WRAZ- DT, Durham, NC

The original 1-day VSB Fundamentals course contains all the basics of data communication in general as well as the VSB System in particular, and is a pre-requisite to the 1-day VSB Measurements seminar. For additional information contact the instructor Gary Sgrignoli, Meintel, Sgrignoli & Wallace at (847) 259-3352 or Gary.Sgrignoli@IEEE.org. For the Los Angeles seminar contact Ralph Ortiz, KMEX, (310) 348-3559, rotiz@univision.net. In Durham, contact Chuck Britt, (919) 676-8611, cbritt@vnet.net.

