

Celestial Tiger preps kids channel for Asia

Multi-screen Mandarin Miao Mi launches Q4

Hong Kong-based Asia channel operator, Celestial Tiger Entertainment, is entering Asia's kids arena for the first time with multi-platform brand Miao Mi. The regional pre-school channel launches in Q4 this year with Asian content filters and a strong Mandarin-language learning remit.

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Asia video industry worth \$131b in 2019

Media Partners Asia forecasts 6.1% growth on eve of APOS 2015

Media Partners Asia (MPA) has forecast an average 6.1% growth across all video sectors in Asia to 2019, pushing value across the US\$130 billion mark from 2014's US\$97.5 billion. As industry leaders head to Bali for this year's Asia Pacific Video Operators' Summit (Apos), MPA says pay-TV's share of the total ecosystem will be steady at 54%. Free-TV's share about 42% in 2014 will drop to 36%, while online, including over-the-top services, will grow to 10% by 2019 from less than 5% in 2014.

While pay-TV growth will average 6.5%, growth rates in specific Asian markets will differ widely; free TV will average 3.5% and online video, 20%, from a lower base but increasingly significant in North Asia, India and Australasia.

Pay-TV in most markets, particularly in Southeast Asia, doesn't fare as well.

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Food Network adds Taiwan to Asia slate *Scripps' network on 5 new platforms this year*

Scripps Networks Interactive's Food Network rolls out on Taiwan's MOD in the next few months, bringing the number of launches this year so far to five.

In the past two months, Food Network has launched on now TV in Hong Kong and on Indovision, OkeVision and Play Media in Indonesia.

The exact Taiwan launch date has not yet been announced.

The new roll-outs coincide with the premiere of Food Network's first long-form original production, *Food Wars Asia*, based on a Scripps' format out of the U.S.

BBC, Sony launch BBC First block in Japan *AXN Mystery to carry two-hour block from 7 May*

BBC Worldwide and Sony Pictures Television Networks have joined forces to launch the first branded BBC First programme block in Japan.

The two-hour weekly block will air on Thursday nights on dedicated mystery channel, AXN Mystery, from 10pm.

Catch-up will be offered on AXN Mystery Plus, a free on-demand multi-screen companion service for subscribers.

The channel airs mystery programming from around the world. The BBC First block will air premium crime, mystery and thriller titles from the U.K. Titles announced so far



Dr Who

include *Sherlock*, starring Benedict Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman; iconic sci-fi title *Doctor Who*; as well as *The Game*, a spy thriller set in the Cold War. *The Game* will make its Asia premiere on the channel.

Hiroko Ozawa, AXN Mystery's general manager, says the channel has had great success with British drama "so it

made perfect sense to create a destination for them on our schedule".

Japan is the second market in the world with the BBC First brand. A full channel launched in Australia in August last year on Foxtel's pay-TV platform.

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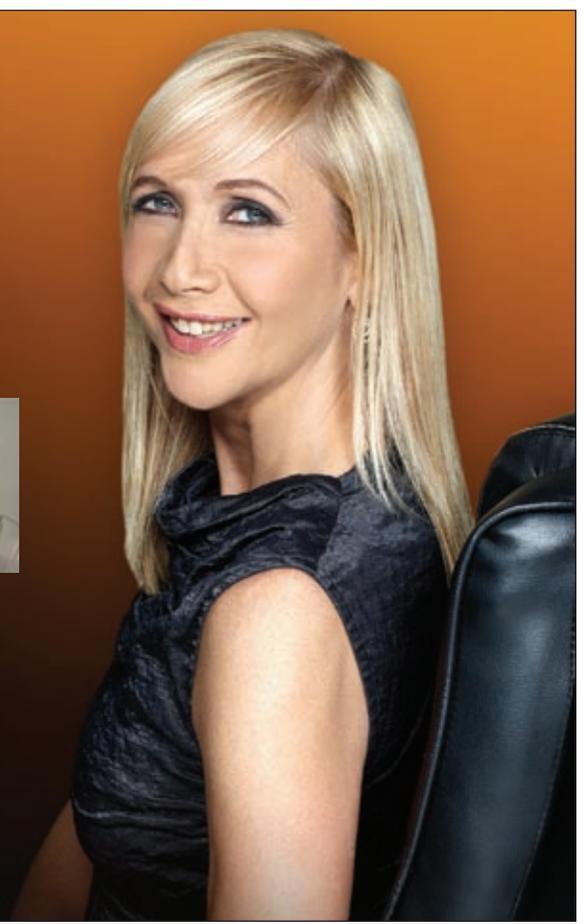


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Celestial Tiger preps kids channel for Asia

Multi-screen, language service for pre-schoolers

Hong Kong-based Asia channel operator, Celestial Tiger Entertainment, enters the kids arena for the first time later this year with multi-platform brand Miao Mi.

The channel is aimed at kids between three and six years old, and will carry a mix of genres, including animation, live action and movies available in Mandarin with local language sound track options.

Miao Mi, in development for a year, is scheduled to launch in the fourth quarter of this year as a linear channel with on-demand, catch-up and over-the-top rights as well.

The channel may carry advertising in some markets, depending on what's "culturally relevant and acceptable for each market," says Celestial Tiger Entertainment chief executive, Todd Miller.

Like Celestial's other channels, Miao Mi has been created in Asia and is programmed locally aimed at an international audience.

Content is being sourced from across the region, and particularly China, with an educational framework and content filters shaped in conjunction with child development experts. The line-up will be a mix of genres, including scripted and unscripted live action, with parenting programmes in evening slots.

First and exclusive Asia-Pacific rights secured so far include *Star Babies*, *Secret Y*, *Happy Friends/Happy Hero* and *Penguin Clan*.

Multi-screen opportunities will be exploited from day one. "For kids born in 2015, digital is in their DNA," Miller says,

adding that all content has been cleared for multi-device, on-demand viewing. "All screens are equal and offer an opportunity to engage," Miller says.

"Miao Mi is not only a Chinese kids channel made for the Chinese customer segment, it is created to cater to non-Chinese speaking/educated kids as much as Chinese-speaking/educated kids," Miller says, adding that the channel was originally suggested by one of Asia's pay-TV platforms.

Miller says while Asia's kids space is crowded, "there is no channel that is pan-Asian in its content approach and that is designed for audiences internationally... Miao Mi will have a unique Asian perspective in terms of values and references from Asian cultures," Miller says, adding: "There is also a growing demand for Mandarin-language learning."

Local audio tracks will be added for each market. Miller says the choice of language track will, ideally, be made in-home, giving parents the final choice of what language/s they want to expose their children to.

The decision to focus on pre-schoolers underscores the channel's Mandarin-language learning agenda. "In this crowded landscape, any new channel needs to be focused and targeted," Miller says, adding: "We recognise that educating and entertaining applies to kids of all ages, but from a developmental perspective, three to six years old is a sweet spot for kids to absorb something new,



especially language."

Celestial's expanded agenda comes on top of double-digit audience growth for its Asian movie and entertainment channels in Southeast Asia. Flagship service Celestial Movies, for example, was up 25% in Malaysia in the first quarter of this year over last year among Astro Chinese Malaysian subs 20-49, the core audience for movie channels. This follows 61% audience growth for the first three months of 2014 over the same quarter in 2013. In Indonesia, Celestial Movies is the number two movie channel ranked by average audience from January 2014 to March 2015, second only to Fox Movies Premium. In Malaysia, Kix was number two among all English-language general entertainment channels on Astro in the first quarter of this year, second only to Sony's Axn, for all audiences 20-49.

Celestial Tiger will be expanding its Hong Kong-based team to accommodate the new channel as part of what Miller says is "a significant investment". Financial details have not been disclosed. Announcements on new hires will be made over the next few months.

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**Oe joins Grindon's
Legendary Television
Colony, The Expanse to
screen in L.A. in May**

Alex Oe has joined Michael Grindon's Legendary Television as vice president, distribution, for Asia. Oe, most recently sales and acquisition director for CJ Entertainment, will be based in Seoul. The Asia appointment comes as Legendary prepares to screen two new one-hour television series at the L.A. Screenings in May. The two shows are *Colony*, which premieres on USA Network this fall, and *The Expanse*, which premieres on Syfy later this year.

**HyppTV, Digi tie up on
mobile video packages
Five new packages on offer
from RM10 a month**

Telekom Malaysia's HyppTV and mobile telco Digi Communications have tied up to offer HyppTV Everywhere to mobile customers. The newly minted partners launched this month with five packages exclusive to Digi's 11 million customers. Packages start at RM10/US\$2.75 a month, and include Euronews, Bloomberg TV, Al Jazeera, Discovery Kids, Nick Jr, Warner TV, Comedy Central HD and Fox Football Channel HD. The mobile platform also offers video on demand channels for sports and movies.

**Diva Asia drops
The Good Wife ep18
Censorship wins in
gay marriage debate**

Episode 18 of CBS Studios' latest season of *The Good Wife* went MIA on NBC Universal's Diva channel on 7 April. The Singapore-based regional female-focused entertainment channel said the episode's story line contravened content codes in some Asian markets and had to be dropped. The episode features a legal case involving gay marriage and religious freedom. Diva repeated episode 17 for the week that episode 18 should have aired, and went straight onto episode 19 on 15 April.

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**Discovery Kids adds
35+ hours to Asia line up
Wild Kratts tops acquisitions from Canada**

Discovery Kids has picked up another 26 episodes of Canadian distributor 9 Story Media Group's animated action adventure *Wild Kratts* for Asia Pacific. The regional children's network has also renewed the first season of the series along with season one of *Finding Stuff Out* (16x22 mins), which will air across Asia Pacific, and two seasons of *Survive This* (28x22 mins), which will air in Southeast Asia and Hong Kong.



Wild Kratts

From page 1: APOS 2015

MPA executive director Vivek Couto says there are real structural issues limiting pay-TV growth in both Thailand and Indonesia, but also across other markets.

In addition, he says the alignment that used to exist between platforms and channel partners has dissolved, creating conflicting agendas with the added distraction of OTT.

"Few are aligned about growing tiers, subscribers and ad sales," Couto says. "What used to be a collective mission has become divided and it's our job this year to make it a shared enterprise and that extends to OTT... whether it's SVOD or AVOD, legal commercial consumption of content needs a collective shot in the arm across all video platforms."

Growth in India will be reasonable and steady, driven by direct-to-home (DTH) satellite. Broadband infrastructure in India is also growing, says MPA.

In addition, Couto says, "our forecasts reveal a significant growth in mobile broadband growth across the region and fixed broadband networks are starting to gain pace even in Southeast Asia".

While OTT players such as Netflix are targeting Australia, China and Japan, telcos such as Singtel (Hooq) and PCCW are notably focused on emerging markets, taking in Southeast Asia and India, leveraging both mobile and fixed networks.

Key sessions this year at APOS are expected to focus on stronger integration between pay-TV and OTT platforms; the growth of TV-based video platforms online to rival Google and Facebook; and analysis of a "back to basics" approach that hinges on execution and long-term commitment that should help renew pay-TV in key markets, Couto says.

Announcements are expected at

APOS this year from Astro, Disney, Da Vinci, Fox, Rewind, Sony and ZooMoo, among others.

For the second year running, MPA has downgraded Indonesia. This follows a 20% downgrade in MPA's figures last year. "Indonesian pay-TV is approaching a real bottom and the only way forward is to



Vivek Couto

to drive ad sales.

Growth in Thailand will centre around DTT and satellite, with little excitement in the pay-TV sector.

Vietnam, meanwhile, is not a big story for foreign players, mostly because of channel licensing issues.

Foreign channel businesses

“ Few are aligned about growing tiers, subscribers and ad sales. What used to be a collective mission has become divided and it's our job this year to make it a shared enterprise and that extends to OTT... whether it's SVOD or AVOD, legal commercial consumption of content needs a shot in the arm across all video platforms.”

Vivek Couto, Media Partners Asia (MPA)

rise up or recede further into the pits of piracy and free distribution," says Couto.

The Philippines, on the other hand, has been upgraded, as has Australia, with a small upgrade in Hong Kong thanks to channel repackaging, new boxes and a new user interface at now TV.

Couto describes the Philippines as "a potential stand out across all sectors", and says growth is expected at both the high- and lower-end of the market. Among other drivers is the digital terrestrial (DTT) market, which local players are tapping for growth.

While Malaysia's subs growth is expected to be modest, MPA shows strong average revenue per user (ARPU) growth. MPA is optimistic about Astro's efforts to drive subscription video on-demand (SVOD) and says new data collection methods are showing robust consumption of international content as well as expected stellar consumption of international content. Astro will leverage this

and global media groups anchored in Southeast Asia need to find a strong story in advertising or subscription.

MPA says the only markets providing these are Korea, Japan, China, India and Taiwan as well as Australia, which all have robust in-home advertising and subscription.

MPA says global majors are fast tracking their Korean initiatives, and expects more international activity between Korea and other parts of the world. If these are successful, others will attempt to emulate the models.

Another forecast is more significant alliances between big content groups and telcos for online and OTT services, in Southeast Asia and other parts of the region.

With significant operator consolidation continuing, Couto says it's only matter of time when channel groups do the same, across distribution and ad sales.

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ContentAsia Schedules – a look at scheduling strategies around the region.

AMC Asia

Time/Day	Monday, 20 April	Tuesday, 21 April	Wednesday, 22 April	Thursday, 23 April	Friday, 24 April	Saturday, 25 April	Sunday, 26 April
7pm							5.20pm: Dead Man Walking (1995)
7.20pm	6.15pm: Double Impact (2001)	6pm: The Falcon and the Snowman (1985)	6.30pm: Break 2: Electric Boogaloo (1984)	6pm: Rain Man (1988)	Uptown Girls (2003)	6.30pm: Cool Blue (1990)	Hollywood's Best Film Directors: S1 Ep65 (2012)
7.50pm							
8pm	Game of Arms S1 Ep6 (2014)		Halt and Catch Fire S1 Ep6 (2014)			Hell on Wheels S1 Ep10 (2011)	
8.30pm		Into the Blue (2005)		French Kiss (1995)			The Cider House Rules (1999)
9pm			The Divide S1 Ep6 (2014)		The Pallbearer (1996)	The Divide S1 Ep7 (2014)	
10pm	Hell On Wheels S1 Ep10 (2011)		The Divide S1 Ep7 (2014)	Valley Girl (1983)		Halt and Catch Fire S1 Ep6 (2014)	
11pm		Cool Blue (1990)			Four Weddings and a Funeral (1994)		Mr. Holland's Opus (1995)
11.30pm	Game of Arms S1 Ep6 (2014)	Into the Blue (2005)	The Divide S1 Ep6 (2014)	French Kiss (1995)		Hell on Wheels S1 Ep10 (2011)	
12am							

● Movie: 22.5hrs/64%
 ● Reality: 2hrs/6%
 ● Drama: 10hrs/29%
 ● Biography: 0.5hrs/1%

Time/Day	Monday, 18 May	Tuesday, 19 May	Wednesday, 20 May	Thursday, 21 May	Friday, 22 May	Saturday, 23 May	Sunday, 24 May
7pm	6.25pm: Five on the Black Hand Side (1973)	6.30pm: Four Weddings and a Funeral (1994)	5.40pm: Mr. Holland's Opus (1995)	6pm: Dead Man Walking (1995)	6pm: Cop Land (1997)	6pm: Coming Hong (1978)	Secret Admirer (1985)
8pm							
8.30pm	Game of Arms S1 Ep6 (2014)		Halt and Catch Fire S1 Ep10 (2014)			Hell On Wheels S2 Ep4 (2012)	
9pm		Barbershop (2002)	4th and Loud S1 Ep2 (2014)	At Close Range (1986)	Bull Durham (1988)	4th and Loud S1 Ep2 (2014)	Four Weddings and a Funeral (1994)
10pm	Hell On Wheels S2 Ep4 (2012)		4th and Loud S1 Ep3 (2014)			Halt and Catch Fire S1 Ep10 (2014)	
11pm		Barbershop 2: Back In Business (2004)		Walking Tall (2004)			Clerks (1994)
11.30pm	Game of Arms S1 Ep6 (2014)	Barbershop (2002)	4th and Loud S1 Ep4 (2014)	At Close Range (1986)	Coming Hong (1978)	Hell On Wheels S2 Ep4 (2012)	Four Weddings and a Funeral (1994)
12am							

● Movie: 23hrs/66%
 ● Reality: 6hrs/17%
 ● Drama: 6hrs/17%

Source: AMC Asia (as of 14 April 2015, subject to change).
 Note: Schedules are for 7pm-12am (programmes do not necessarily start at 7pm or end at 12am).
 The fourth weeks of the month schedules were chosen for analysis purposes.

MGM channel's new incarnation, AMC Asia, retains a strong movie load on its Asia schedules, sprinkled with a small handful of shiny new exclusive series with shorter windows along with older series from AMC's high-profile catalogue.

Linear entertainment channel AMC Asia replaced MGM – one of the region's oldest regional channel brands – in Janu-

ary this year. MGM content continues to air on the channel, although MGM titles are being reduced to accommodate AMC series and third-party titles.

"We will selectively continue to offer the best from our MGM inventory," says Harold Gronenthal, executive vice president, programming and acquisitions, AMC And Sundance Channel Global.

The network has announced one carriage deal since the switch to AMC, with Singapore's second platform Singtel TV. The linear channel launched on Singtel TV on 23 February. The VOD add-on listed as part of the deal has not yet been activated.

The channel's most significant pro-
More on page 9

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Fear The Walking Dead

From page 7: Schedules

gramming news in Asia this year is the addition of first window rights to *Fear The Walking Dead*, AMC action/adventure title *Into the Badlands*, and season two of *Halt and Catch Fire*. AMC also aired eight-part legal drama *The Divide*.

News of the latest acquisitions came just ahead of the 7 May premiere of political thriller *The Honourable Woman*, starring Maggie Gyllenhaal, on sister channel Sundance; the first-window rights to the series exclude Thailand, where the series has already aired.

Fear The Walking Dead is scheduled to air globally on AMC from late summer, followed by season two in 2016. Plans are to air the six-part series within 24 hours of the U.S.

Fear The Walking Dead, set in Los Angeles, stars Cliff Curtis (*Missing*), Kim Dickens (*Gone Girl*), Frank Dillane (*Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*) and Alysia Debnam Carey (*Into the Storm*).

AMC is scheduled to complement Sundance Channel, Gronenthal says. "Sundance Channel offers a distinctive line-up of independent films and documentaries – many of which are seen just months after debuting at prestigious film festivals – and AMC features a wide selection of popular movies featuring well-known actors and directors," he says.

A sampling of a week on air in April and



The Divide

May shows about 65% or 23 hours (of a total 35 hours a week, Monday to Sunday, 7pm-midnight) filled with movies.

AMC Asia had 17 movie slots in the fourth week of April (20-26 April, 7pm-midnight). The line up is a mix of titles from three decades, the oldest being 1983's *Valley Girl*, a romantic comedy based on Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. The newest title is 2005 adventure movie *Into the Blue*, with Jessica Alba and Paul Walker.

For the week of 18 May (7pm-midnight), there are 18 movie slots, carrying films ranging from 1973's *Five on the Black Hand Side*, a comedy based on the play by Charlie L. Russell, to 2004's *Barbershop 2: Back In Business*, a film about a long-standing barbershop in South Chicago..

AMC has carriage in eight Asia markets, including Chunghwa MOD in Taiwan, Singtel TV in Singapore and TrueVisions in Thailand.

ContentAsia's regular section, ContentAsia Formats, looks at formats and format development in Asia, including new seasons, series and trends and what these mean to channels, producers and the overall formats industry in the region.

Lightning Quiz

Lightning Quiz, a quiz show format is Thailand's highest-rated programme in the home-grown game/quiz show category.

Created by Thailand's production house Workpoint Entertainment, *Lightning Quiz* garnered a high of 4.84 TVR (more than two million viewers) on 27 January, according to Nielsen Thailand data provided by Workpoint Entertainment.

On the social front, *Lightning Quiz* has gained an average of more than three million YouTube views for each episode and 102,000 Facebook page likes within four months of launching (June-Oct 2014) – the highest among Workpoint-branded game/quiz show programmes during that time.

The quiz show premiered on 9 June 2014 on digital terrestrial channel Workpoint Creative TV and has aired more than 200 episodes.

Targeting family households, the 45-minute quiz show airs weekdays from 7.15pm to 8pm and is executive produced by Phanya Nirunkul (founder/chairman, Workpoint Entertainment), who is also the host of the show, and Prapas Cholsaranon (founder/vice chairman). A team of 40 people was involved in making the programme.

Lightning Quiz starts with two teams, each consisting of three members (two celebrities and one contestant). The aim is to answer 10 tricky general knowledge questions within two minutes



Lightning Quiz

and any team member who is able to answer all 10 questions correctly will win THB1 million/US\$30,898 cash prize. The winning team moves on to participate in the jackpot round to win the grand prize of a brand new car worth THB1 million/US\$31,000.

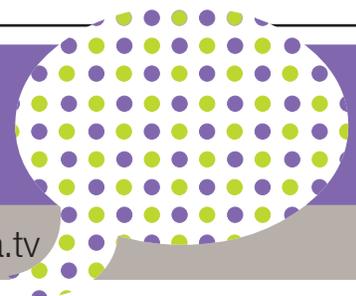
Creating questions for the show has been one of the challenges says Chanattra Ammatmanee, licensing supervisor of Workpoint Entertainment. "The questions we come up with might sound easy, but once you are seated in the 'Lightning Chair' and with the pressure to answer within the given time, it is not as simple as it seems," Ammatmanee explains. The key is to stay calm and remain focused, Ammatmanee adds. So far, only three people have won

the top THB1 million cash prize.

The Lightning Chair, where contestants sit to answer questions, is the game's highlight. The customised mechanical chair moves a level up with each correct answer and down to level zero with every wrong answer. The aim is to create a "roller coaster" experience for contestants and viewers.

Questions posed in the game show have included the number of dwarfs in Snow White, the name of Barbie's boyfriend, and how many legs a grasshopper has.

In addition to its local creations, Workpoint's international formats slate includes *Thailand's Got Talent*, *My Man Can* and *Identity Thailand*.



ContentAsia's regular interview talks to people doing big and bigger things to move the industry forward. Janine Stein talks to Sashim Parmanand, chief executive of production house One Animation.

Singapore-based One Animation has the same goal as every content producer: to tell universal stories that broadcasters/platforms everywhere will buy and kids will love and engage with. Six years on, where are they with that? A fair way in and pushing hard, with sensible financials, new funding that will drive an ambitious five-year expansion plan, seven oddbods, a few good insects and an irresistibly evil mosquito called Adilla.

So far, two seasons of One Animation's first property, *Rob the Robot*, have been co-produced with Amberwood and distributed internationally by EOne. The show has aired in 80 countries worldwide on, among others, Disney Junior (Asia), Discovery Kids (Latin America) and ABC (Australia).

The second title, the CG animated *Oddbods* ("There's a little odd in everybody"), now has more than 300 one-minute shorts and is creating a second series of seven-minute versions. The first seven-minute episode debuted at MipTV in Cannes this month.

One Animation's third piece of IP, *The Insectibles*, which started life as preschool series *Bug Buddies*, is

The Insectibles



being backed by Discovery and ZDF. The series (52x11 mins) is in production. The first 13 episodes deliver in June this year, followed by the entire series in December 2015. The series premieres in the fourth quarter of this year.

By 2016, chief executive officer Sashim Parmanand will have added a feature film as part of the company's five-year development plan.

"One Animation's key goal is to develop and create engaging character driven stories through a robust ideation process," Parmanand says, adding: "With each of the original IP we develop, we constantly assess whether it is best brought to our target audience through either episodic or feature-length formats. Our goal is to have a diversified portfolio of content that engages and delights kids and families across the world".

The dialogue-free *Oddbods* is One Animation's biggest success so far. The series debuted on Disney XD in the U.S. in January this year and aired in France on Canal+ kids channel Teletoon+ in February and March. In Taiwan, the episodes are being downloaded five million times a month on the Next Media app; Jimmy Lai's Next Media is One Animation's second biggest shareholder. In Indonesia, *Oddbods* on Antv was beating popular cartoons such as *Tom and Jerry* and *Mr Bean* in three weeks. In Latin America, *Oddbods* was in the top five on Turner's Boomerang channel within two months.

The Insectibles ("Welcome to a world that is not just incredible, it's insectible"), is significantly more ambitious than



Sashim Parmanand

Oddbods... and a significantly larger challenge. The series is the story of a boy, a grandpa and three mechanically enhanced insects on a search for the "shrinkinator" – an invention that shrank them all during a failed testing phase.

Among the developments since its inception has been ageing up the series to target six to nine year olds to address market demand. Parmanand, who spent nine years at Turner Broadcasting's Cartoon Network Enterprises, also brought on board a writing team from the U.S. and is driving a focus on making the series "toyetic".

At the same time as thinking about adding a consumer products and/or games element, Parmanand is careful about highlighting story first and foremost, from hiring writers to integrating toys. "We're in the business of story telling," she says.

One of One Animation's biggest strengths is its in-house technology, which automates many of the processes. One Animation co-founder, Steven Read (*Tomb Raider*, *Happy Feet*), describes the animation house as a "tech-driven creative company". The result is a high-speed pipeline with better visual quality at significantly lower cost.

"Very few people heading studios understand the ins and outs of production, creative and technology," Read says, adding: "We've developed and implemented pipelines that others wouldn't even think of." As the *Insectibles* might say, it's a "world of micro proportions with macro adventures".

#whatsyourstory



In ContentAsia's regular section on up-and-coming online platforms in Asia, Malena Amzah speaks to Mark Britt, group chief executive officer of OTT service iflix.



What is iflix? Iflix is a geo-blocked, subscription-based, over-the-top (OTT) regional service offering access to more than 10,000 hours of TV series and movies, bundled into one monthly subscription package and accessible via internet-connected devices. Headquartered in Malaysia, iflix is jointly established by investment company Catcha Group and Evolution Media Capital.

Launch Expected to launch in Malaysia and the Philippines in the second quarter this year. Roll-out plans focus on larger markets in Southeast Asia, including Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam.

Who's driving the initiative... Patrick Grove, co-founder/chairman, iflix Group; Mark Britt, co-founder/chief executive officer, iflix Group; Azran Osman-Rani, chief operating officer, iflix Group/ chief executive officer of iflix Malaysia

What's behind the name? "We wanted a brand that was simple and strong, that could clearly communicate the simplicity of the product proposition. The 'i' is an extension of Catcha's other entities."

Subscription rates Pricing has not been dis-

closed. The promise is "a low price point that will be impossible to say no to".

Target audience "Everyone and anyone who is passionate about content and has access to a mobile phone, tablet, laptop or other internet-connected device. In short, 240 million internet users in Southeast Asia today."

2015 take up expectations "We have a different perspective on time frames. We are confident that within the coming five years, internet TV will be the dominant platform for entertainment in Southeast Asia, and we will be at the forefront of that revolution."

The offering More than 10,000 movies and TV series, including titles from Hollywood, Hong Kong, Seoul, Shanghai, Thailand and Tokyo.

Major content partner "We will make formal announcements over the next few weeks but we are working with more than 30 Hollywood, Asian and local distributors at launch."

What kind of windows are you working with? "All windows - from first run to library

- on an exclusive and non-exclusive basis depending on the title and distributor."

How many hours of content do you plan to acquire next year? Not disclosed. "We will have over 10,000 hours of content available in 2015, from Hollywood blockbusters, and TV shows to popular Chinese and Korean dramas in high demand amongst Southeast Asian viewers."

Will you carry local content of all the countries you are rolling out in Asia? "Yes, we believe local content is a critical part of creating a compelling product."

Will iflix create original content? "We will! We have begun speaking with local, up and coming directors, producers and artists to collaborate on original projects."

Social media Iflix has a presence on Facebook (Malaysia and Philippines), Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. "Social is at the heart of everything we do. It is a core part of our service - not a way to expand our presence."

On censorship and piracy "Iflix is sensitive to both the legal requirements and the cultural standards in the countries that it operates in. In addition, iflix has a dedicated kids safe section and pin-code based parental controls."

iflix's 2015 priority "We are just getting started, so the priority is easy... creating passionate, vocal, advocates for the iflix services in our available market."



Mark Britt

The biggest impact on the OTT industry in Asia in 2015 will be... "The continued commitment of governments to the open internet, technological advancements coupled with the open internet promote innovation and expression, resulting in higher quality of services, applications and content for consumers."

The best thing that has happened to iflix so far this year is... "Opening our eyes, emerging from the Catcha womb for the first time."

From thick to thin: heading into the cloud

Slashing upfront investment, round-the-clock updates and a whole new way of working

When Indian platform Videocon d2h committed to infrastructure upgrades earlier this year, the platform joined an inexorable shift towards changing the way audiences everywhere experience video entertainment.

The six-year-old Videocon d2h, with more than 12.6 million direct-to-home subscribers, will collaborate with Cisco to create an infrastructure that supports advanced services such as over the top (OTT), VOD and multi-screen video on a high definition platform.

In addition, Videocon d2h launched its 4K-enabled ultra high definition campaign with Cisco's 4K encoder ahead of the Cricket World Cup in March. The launch of 4K encoders on the Videocon d2h platform in February this year, marking the first ever deployment of Cisco's AnyRes Live UHD Encoder in the world, will be followed by two more customer deployments in Asia Pacific. Details of the addition two platforms have not yet been disclosed.

As the latest deals were signed, both Cisco and Videocon d2h talked about immersive video experiences, an array of value-added services such as VOD and multi-room DVR, multi-screen applications, OTT and the brilliance of ultra HD.

The Indian platform is clearly not alone in attempting to future proof its business. Platforms across the region are trying, with varying degrees of success, to up their game, adding on-demand, promising multi-screen access, shifting to HD, talking about higher relevance and deeper engagement, and general

sprinkling digital pixie dust across everything they do.

Coming soon are cloud-based platforms that will allow video operators to offer high-end scalable services with little or none of the steep upfront infrastructure investments they once would have had to make. This dawn-ing environment is built on ubiquitous high-speed wireless connectivity – still a stumbling block across much of Asia.

Offering video as a service to operators moves the model from capex to opex, allowing platforms to pay a per-subscriber fee based on take up, says Sue Taylor, president sales, Asia Pacific, Cisco service provider video software solutions.

The new cloud-based environment will enable operators to offer multiple services for all screens seamlessly and with the same interface across all platforms, rather than separate services for, for instance, DTH and mobile.

As pretty as it all sounds, the challenges are still significant. "We need to have connected infrastructure – either by broadband or mobile wifi – to have a cloud service," Taylor says.

In many part of Asia, markets are still dealing with one-way systems and very little return-path connectivity. Other centres, including Australia and New Zealand, are ready and raring to go. Taylor says progress will "come in waves", much like digitisation, with markets such as Korea supported by strong local tech companies. In other markets, including India and Thailand, progress



Sue Taylor

will be as fast as the development of the infrastructure.

One of the products that will make a significant change to the entertainment environment is cloud-based DVR (digital video recording), which will save operators from having to spend \$200 on a box that sits in each home. The benefits of cloud storage include subscribing to multiple services, seamless upgrades, push content.

"Everything is moving from being thick in the home to being thin and everything is in the cloud," Taylor says.

"Before, we would be rolling out a new software release once or twice a year. [With cloud services] we can roll out software changes as often as required. It shifts the entire paradigm," Taylor says, talking about more agile development, "scrum teams" of developers writing, testing and delivering much more quickly. "It's a whole new way of working," she says.



Life after data

Shifting from “our” data to the ecosystem of data, GfK says

The benefits of Big Data to the entertainment industry sound wonderful – and one day they will be. But right here, right now? Not so much.

“Companies are offering more and more subscription-based or registration-based services, across more devices, and are collecting mountains of data about their users and audiences. But most of this potential is currently going unused,” says a new report from research company, GfK.

The report, *Big Questions, Big Answers – Will harnessing smart data for audience analytics save the broadcast industry?*, says that although today’s media and entertainment industry is at the forefront of this change, there is still a long way to go.

“All the business models around data are still in the stage of thinking about ‘our’ data rather than the ecosystem of data,” says Niko Waesche, global lead of GfK’s media and entertainment industry division.

At the same time, the report quotes case studies that show significant increases in data-enhanced video on demand (VOD) ad sales. Channel 4 in the U.K., for example, expects that in two years as much as 50% of its total VOD inventory will be traded based on demographically targeted information, up from 15% today.

Gathering the views of media execs from 14 companies around the world, GfK says “finding the right role for Big Data in the TV world is becoming a business must-have”.

The big question is what data and how best to use it. “There is a lot of expectation that Big Data will be a silver bullet. Yet where we see greatest impact is not always from the big, sexy ideas but from the cumulative increase in understanding of data to improve the business,” says Tom Weiss, chief executive of Genius Digital, a data analytics company in which GfK has a stake.

In one anecdote, Genius Digital used data analysis to discover an entire demographic segment that the local opera-

tor had assumed was not interested in watching rugby. “Once they had been convinced otherwise by the data, they adapted their marketing to better capture those viewers,” the report says, adding that companies have moved from speaking about “asset based data” – basic facts such as the number of subscribers, the number of pieces of content or the number of “plays” in a given time period – to behavioral data, from panel based systems to real-time, individual data on a much greater scale.

“Six months ago we were doing the basics. TV ratings, website numbers and topline social media numbers.” says Philip O’Ferrall, senior vice president of Viacom International Media Networks. “Now we have a business intelligence team and the guy who runs it has a PhD in maths. Every stat we get builds value into a piece of content,” he adds.

In Malaysia, pay-TV platform Astro’s chief executive, Rohana Rozhan, says Astro is starting to think in a “more organised and cohesive way” about Big Data.

Platforms everywhere say the effort is not simply about more data, but about understanding how people are using services. “As often happens in the data world, how you transform and interpret the data is the secret sauce,” says Tony Mooney, managing director of Sky TV’s Sky IQ. “It’s very easy when you have a fire hose of data pointing at you to get drowned in the stuff that is completely irrelevant,” he says.

The key is to use Big Data to plan and develop content that appeals to customers. This should in turn attract more advertisers. Astro chief operating officer, Henry Tan, calls this the “winning horse” strategy. “Advertising is like betting on the winning horse,” he says, “so our focus is to give the advertisers more winning horses.”



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