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NAB Probes Future of 3-D

April 20, 2009

-By Carolyn Giardina, THR.com

Disney motion pictures group president Mark Zoradi emphasized that "we don't want a format war for 3-D for the home" as he called for technical standards to enable the wide adoption of 3-D on Sunday at the National Association of Broadcasters Show.

"We view 3-D as part of a holistic business opportunity, and we need to upgrade every distribution channel in order to support the new 3-D that we are now producing," he said in a keynote at the NAB digital cinema summit, during which he previewed content including a new 3-D teaser trailer for Toy Story 3.

Citing the recent Blu-Ray Disc/HD DVD battle, he said: "Your standards will allow us to creatively manage our digital content. We need 3-D standards to be flexible...allowing audiences to see 3-D any way they want to view it and in the highest possible quality."

The many moving parts to 3-D--both for theatrical release and the home--were explored during the weekend summit and will continue to be analyzed as the full NAB Show exhibition and convention opens Monday in Las Vegas.

Making news as the event was getting under way, international standards-setting body the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers--which produced the summit with the Entertainment Technology Center at USC--released an influential report on 3-D that could result in 3-D home standards in one year.

The document outlines recommendations and findings of the SMPTE 3-D task force that will be used by the society to complete a set of stereoscopic 3-D home master standards for content viewed on TVs and computer monitors.

Wendy Aylsworth, SMPTE vp engineering and senior vp technology at Warner Bros. Studios, expects the core standards to be completed by June 2010.

On the theatrical distribution side of the equation, eyes remain on digital-cinema deployment, as these screens are required to enable digital 3-D. The set standards follow the Digital Cinema Initiatives technical specification.

"No product today meets the DCI spec," warned Michael Karagosian, president of MKPE Consulting and senior technical advisor to the National Association of Theater Owners, adding that this included both servers and projectors currently in the field. "We need to get there. DCI compliance is written into the deployment funding agreements."

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Uneventful Sunday Rating Results

2009-04-20

There was little of note on this third Sunday of April, including a potential record low for the 2009 Miss USA Pageant on NBC, a lackluster start for Fox animated sitcom Sit Down, Shut Up, and a sluggish Hallmark Hall of Fame's The Courageous Heart of Irene Sendler on CBS.

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