

Broadcast and Beyond 2010

Over 180 people attended the prestigious Broadcast & Beyond Conference, sponsored by ASTRA GB, in central London on 19 May. The morning was dedicated to the more technical aspects of what the future holds for television, while the afternoon was given over opinion from leading broadcasting figures.

This year's conference keynote address on the state of the television industry was given by **Tim Gardham, MBE**, principal of St. Anne's College, Oxford and a board member of Ofcom, the UK's independent regulator and competition authority for the UK communications industries. Tim has a long involvement with television having worked at the BBC, Five and Channel 4 where he was director of programmes. He also led a review of digital Britain for the Department of Media, Culture and Sport.

Following **David Fell, chief technology officer of ANT**, who spoke about technical challenges of HbbTV, ASTRA's **Thomas Wrede, VP Product Management Media**, discussed the introduction of Hybrid Broadcast Broadband TV (HbbTV) and related the experiences of Germany, which already has the technology. He emphasised that to succeed HbbTV requires standardization - already accepted by the European Telecommunications Standards Institute - as well as a major marketing effort. He expects that HbbTV enabled flat screens will be available commercially and introduced at the IFA Berlin show in September.

Dr. David Lewis, leading cognitive neurophysiologist and Chairman and Research Director of The Mind Lab conducted original research, commissioned by ASTRA GB, that investigated how viewers consciously and sub-consciously respond to hybrid TV technology. The study demonstrated that hybrid advertisements - those that allow the

viewer to interact in some way with the advert - had a recall rate of 73% compared with 18% for standard commercials.

Brain patterns were measured and the analysis of those watching hybrid TV suggested a simple and enjoyable experience, manifested by high ad and product recall. It was found that viewers of standard commercials found it to be a mentally straining experience - resulting in lower product and ad recall.

Talking about 3DTV **Chris Johns, chief engineer of BSkyB**, reported a positive reaction to Sky's 3D launch of live soccer events with over 70% of viewers giving it the thumbs-up with a rating of 8, 9, 10 on a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the best. He said, 'Over one million 3D screens are anticipated in the UK by 2011, with 2.5 million Sky+ HD set-top boxes capable of receiving 3DTV.'

Johns also said that he saw no sign of the momentum gathering behind the technology slowing down and expected it to increase as the process of filming has become less complicated, thanks to the digital age. As cameras had also evolved there is now the ability to make two kinds of programmes, non 3D *and* 3D at a small, additional cost. Sky is planning several 3D sporting events in the future - and that includes the London 2012 Olympics.

Other speakers in the morning included **Rhys McLachlan, managing partner at MediaCom**, where he is currently in charge of Implementation and Futures with a brief to apply innovation and best practice to the agency's clients. They spend £1 billion each year for their clients and he told delegates that addressable advertising was the "Holy Grail" and that they'd been working closely with BSkyB on Adsmart addressable advertising technology.

McLachlan said that the technology itself was impressive and was successful in delivering ads to a targeted audience but that, at the

moment, there was no way to prove delivery. But he supported the concept, especially given that a large proportion of UK viewers were now connected to high speed broadband. He thought there was an inevitability about the shift towards more sophisticated set-top boxes whether from DTH or cable/IPTV.

Paul Robinson, co-founder and managing director of KidsCo - a global children's channel broadcasting in some 85 countries and 17 languages - spoke of the GenMT. That is generation multi-tasking, where children are effortlessly, Twittering, talking to friends on Facebook, watching TV *and* doing their homework. He believes that linear television will still be a force in ten years time, but also that we are only at the beginning of the internet revolution and that kids will consume content on multiple platforms in ways that possibly haven't yet been thought of.

After lunch three highly respected journalists and authors, with their fingers on the pulse of what makes television in the UK tick gave their personal views. **Andrew Neil**, who presents the Daily Politics show for BBC Television was also a founding chairman of Sky TV gave an insight into what the UK can expect from the new government as far as media is concerned. **Ray Snoddy**, spoke eloquently on the Future of Broadcast News. **Will Self**, author, satirist and journalist gave a highly amusing and irreverent view of what he would do if he ran television.

All three were then joined by **Don Foster - Member of Parliament for Bath** and, before the general election, the Liberal Democrat spokesman on Media - and Paul Robinson of KidsCo - on a panel to take questions from the floor. Chaired by Andrew Neil, the hour-long session was lively, informative and thought provoking. A networking party was then held at the Victoria & Albert Museum.

Feedback forms were received from over 50% of delegates and the general consensus was that the conference was interesting and relevant to their businesses.

"Fascinating and illuminating mix of technical facts, operational strategies and political vision." Richard Dean, TVB-Europe (trade magazine)

"An excellent day. Interesting speakers and challenging issues." Jonny Martin DCMS/BIS (Department of Culture, Media, Sport and Business, Innovation and Skills)

"Extremely good line-up of speakers." Paul Robinson, KidsCo Ltd.

"It was a brilliant event with great speakers, opinion makers and topical issues." Elisabeth Goossens, Champion Communications

"Will Self, Andrew Neil and Ray Snoddy were excellent, especially Will. Well done to all involved. The Question Time panel session was very good fun. "

Ben Hine, UKTV

"The Will Self session was particularly good - particularly the panel - serious points made through humour." David Maynard, VMTV/UKTV

"Good variety of speakers, wide range of topics, more time for Question Time please." Jimmy Humphrey, Freemantle Media

"Good mix of materials and subjects. Andrew Neil particularly good."

David Holliday, BSkyB

"Cracking venue. Ray Snoddy and Andrew Neil excellent, Tim Gardham and Thomas Wrede good content and well presented." Chris A, Five