

Thai platforms draw battle lines *Channel grab speeds up in Year of the Horse*



Major League Soccer: Thierry Henry from New York Red Bulls, beIN Sports

Content battle lines continue to be drawn in Thailand, with sports at the centre of a high-stakes TV play that started last year.

Al Jazeera-backed sports channel, beIN Sports, is the latest beneficiary of intensified rivalry between pay-TV incumbent TrueVisions and restructured newcomer CTH (also known as Cable Thai Holding).

beIN Sports 1 launched exclusively on TrueVisions this month with live content from, among others, the Scottish Professional Football League, cup tournaments including the Scottish Challenge Cup and

Scottish League Cup, and a schedule of factual and magazine programming.

TrueVisions also added sports channel ASN2 to its expanded sports offering this month. The platform said the new deal gives viewers more NFL, NCAA, basketball and formula drift, among other sports.

This is in addition to TrueVisions' exclusive access for 2014 to premium badminton events (Asian Championships, World Championship, Thomas & Uber Cup, Sudirman Cup, Super Series, Grand Prix

More on page 11

JUST SAYING...

“I would like all NHK employees, beginning with director [Katsuto] Momii, to continue broadcasting fairly and impartially without yielding to any kind of political pressure”.

Japanese Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, following comments by new NHK boss Katsuto Momii about his willingness to toe the government's political line even though NHK is legally obliged to be impartial. That was before another of Abe's NHK appointees, Naoki Hyakuta, declared that the Nanjing massacre of 1937 “never happened”. Common opinion is that Abe is attempting to shift NHK to the right.



FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH

The Year of the Horse kicked off with a coup for Turner (Shitiz Jain joins Ricky Ow's team as finance SVP), a loss for Discovery (Shitiz Jain exits after 15 years), extremes for RTL CBS (new channel, RTL CBS Extreme, launches in March), more fighting in Hong Kong (RTHK knocked back on new HQ but vows to go down fighting)... clearly a mixed bag of fortunes so far for Asia's content industry.

What are the soothsayers forecasting for this year of the green wood horse? Most are using words like “fast”, some mention conflict and hard line stands on principles that in other years would probably be negotiable.

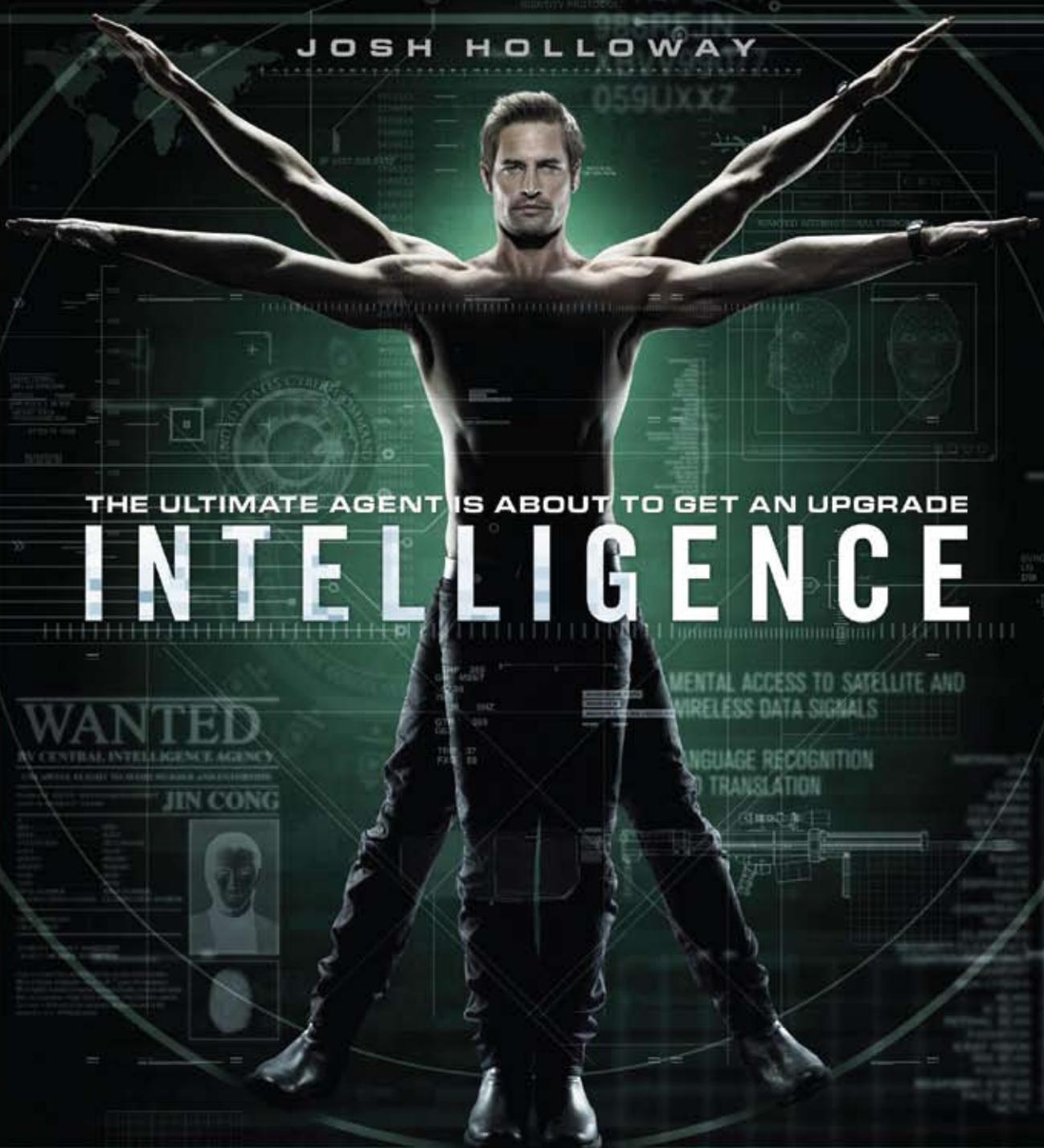
This year's horse is also full of powerful fire energy. Warnings abound about explosions, gun-fire and conflict. The common theme is that this is unlikely to be a peaceful year.

The good news is that media companies do well under the fire/young horse, even if there is a danger of sex scandals (*Vanity Fair* and the Rupert/Wendi expose driven by higher celestial powers?). The year's energy can be positively channelled into sports; a good omen for June's FIFA World Cup.

Yang wood people include Bruce Lee, born on a yang wood day in 1940, who made his name with *Fist of Fury* (1970). Keifer Sutherland is another yang wood guy, and 24 also goes down as a typical yang wood tale. And those, surely, are good signs.

And with that, here's wishing you all Gong Xi Fa Cai, Kung Hei Fat Choi and a prosperous year filled with hi-energy, blockbuster content.

JOSH HOLLOWAY



THE ULTIMATE AGENT IS ABOUT TO GET AN UPGRADE

INTELLIGENCE

WANTED

BY CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

FOR SPECIAL REASON TO BE HUNG, BURNED AND CRUCIFIED

JIN CONG



MENTAL ACCESS TO SATELLITE AND WIRELESS DATA SIGNALS

LANGUAGE RECOGNITION TRANSLATION

©2013 ABC Studios. The mark "RTL" is owned by RTL-JFA S.A. and CBS & Eye Design® are registered trademarks of CBS Broadcasting Inc.

RTL CBS

FIRST AND EXCLUSIVE ON

ENTERTAINMENT HD

Premieres February 11, Tuesday at 9:55pm (8:55pm JKT/BKK)

Be intelligent with your channel line-up, contact distribution@rtlcbasia.com.

www.rtlcbasia.com



RTLCSBEntertainment



RTLCSBEntertain

Thailand's Post boosts television focus

Newspaper group targets booming TV environment

Thailand's listed media group, Post Publishing Plc, is looking to the country's booming television environment for growth.

Despite losing its bid for one of Thailand's new digital terrestrial television (DTT) licences at the end of last year, Post Publishing's message is that the group expects to generate almost half its revenue from its television business in the next four years.

Priorities include acquiring production houses to help populate Thailand's emerging DTT environment and to expand beyond its current video news focus.

Post Publishing's print titles include the English-language daily, *Bangkok Post*, and *Post Today*, as well as consumer magazines such as *Elle*, *Cleo* and *Marie Claire*. Post TV is the group's television/content unit, which, among other content activities, produces news programmes for Channels 5 and 11. Post TV also has an agreement to supply about five and a half hours of news programming a day for new DTT variety service THV Channel.

"We plan to diversify risks from print me-

dia, as its falling trend is being seen around the world and in Thailand. TV has a lot of potential when Thai people will be able to watch digital TV in the coming months," Supakorn Vejajiva, president and chief operating officer, told *Bangkok Post*.

Vejajiva called the move to television "dramatic" and said the aim was to transform Post Publishing into an integrated communications platforms. "This will eventually help to compensate for the decline of advertising in print media," he said.

He also said the company would invest up to THB700 million/US\$21 million in Post TV, and that he expected THB10 million/US\$305,000 profit in year one.

The company's TV segment reported a loss of THB34 million/US\$1 million in the first nine months of last year after TV production revenue dipped from THB263 million/US\$8 million to THB132 million/US\$4 million. The company attributed this mainly to the costs of "heavy promotion and expansion". Post Publishing has not reported its full-year 2013 financials yet.

Singapore's StarHub listens in

New social tracking system strengthens relationship building

Singapore comms and entertainment platform, StarHub, has launched a social media listening lab that allows the company to "actively listen to and extract real-time conversations about StarHub across Singapore".

The facility builds on StarHub's already high score for social response rates. The company says its average response time to customer questions on Facebook is 6.5 hours. This is 32.1 hours less than the industry benchmark in Singapore, StarHub adds.

The new customised Social Hub "gives us an overview of our performance in building strong relationships with custom-

ers in the social media space," says Darren Choo, StarHub's assistant vice president, social customer relationship management.

Choo also says the ability to track results of social media efforts "allows us to better address all concerns more effectively and resolve issues for customers more efficiently".

The new functions allow StarHub to decide when and how to reply to a Facebook query or complaint to tracking where in Singapore mobile, pay-TV or broadband connections are affected through location tagged tweets. The Hub is located within StarHub's call centre using Vocanic's insights platform VSocial.

Lose Yourself To Find Yourself



100% first run, fresh and exclusive original programming



The World Leader in Outdoor Entertainment

www.multichannelsasia.com

THE HIGHEST-GROSSING



1 No. 1 Hong Kong movie at the HK Box Office



HONG KONG MOVIES OF 2013 ARE ON*



2 No. 2 Hong Kong movie at the HK Box Office



天映頻道
CELESTIAL MOVIES



Rigor Mortis



Conspirators



The Way We Dance



Out of Inferno



SDU



Blind Detective

*In selected territories

www.facebook.com/ilikecm

www.celestialmovies.com

Vietnam telcos' content woes shake up launch plans

Vietnam's telcos are pushing back against what they see as an effort to lock them out of content supply for their video platforms.

Both FPT Telecom and Viettel say their pay-TV licences alone are insufficient to make their video businesses work, and they have warned of launch delays if their content difficulties continue.

FPT Telecom deputy general director, Hoang Trung Kien, told Vietnamese agency, VietNamNet Bridge, that telcos had the advantage of transmission infrastructure. But Kien lamented the fact that TV stations did not want to share their content. He called the sharing issue "a tough one" and acknowledged that the parties "have not been able to reach a common voice".

"New suppliers will encounter many difficulties ahead in dealing with this problem," he said.

Viettel execs say that the content issue will delay IPTV service launch, originally scheduled for April this year. FPT Telecom plans to follow in August.

Both companies have been pushing Vietnamese regulators to ensure content supply to new operators. One of the arguments being used is access in rural areas.

Vietnam's communications officials are already on record with a commitment to a list of must-carry channels by all platforms. It is still unclear whether the telcos think that the channels being considered will be sufficient to drive their new services.

Former KBS president dies

Former KBS president, Park Kwon-sang, died this month in Korea. He was 85. Park headed the broadcast network from 1998 to 2003, and was a supporter of developing KBS into a public broadcaster along the lines of NHK in Japan and BBC in the U.K.



World Wars

A+E Networks Asia's History and H2 channels will air the six-part special event series, *World Wars*, this year as part of a global rollout in 160 countries to commemorate the 100-year anniversary of World War I.

The series, by Stephen David Entertainment (*The Men Who Built America*), is currently in post-production in the U.S.

World Wars is the story of three decades of war from the perspective of the men who came of age in the trenches and later decided the fate of a world on the brink of disaster, A+E said this month. They include Roosevelt, Hitler, Patton, Mussolini, Churchill, Tojo, DeGaulle and MacArthur.

The series features interviews with General Colin Powell, former British Prime minister John Major, former Italian prime minister

Mario Monte and Senator John McCain.

Dirk Hoogstra, executive vice president and general manager of History and H2, promises that the series "will have the same quality and cinematic story telling that *The Men Who Built America* and *America: The Story of US* delivered".

In addition to the series, History and H2 are developing a global educational outreach campaign geared toward high school and college students, the network said.

Executive producers for History are Russell McCarroll, Paul Cabana and Christian Murphy.

World Wars comes to Asia History, H2 Asia to showcase six-part anniversary special

Nippon boosts global expansion, acquires Tatsunoko

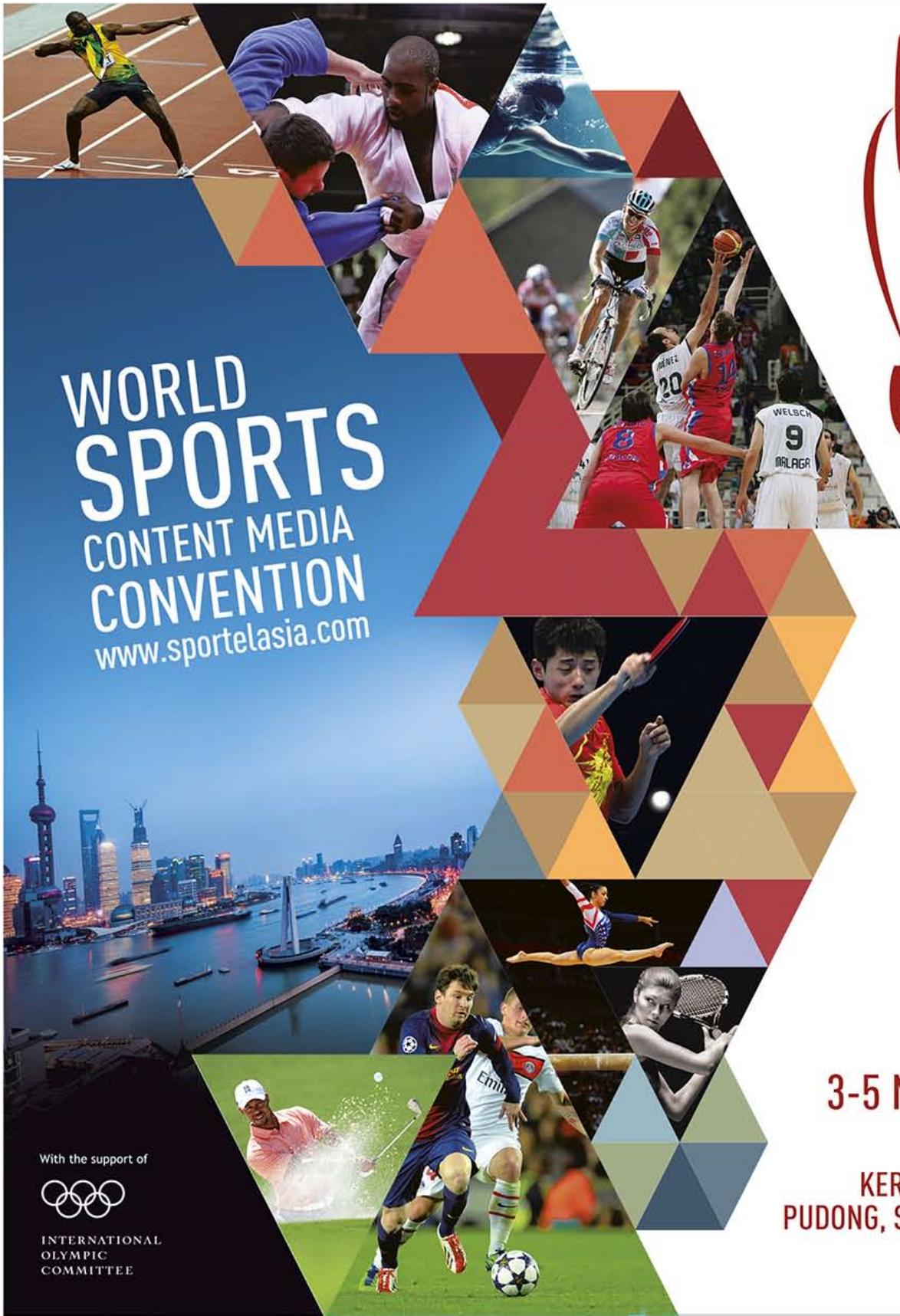
Japanese free-TV broadcaster, Nippon TV, has acquired a 54.3% stake in Tomy Company's Tatsunoko Production.

The deal makes the 52-year-old production house a subsidiary of Nippon TV.

Tatsunoko is involved in animated films, TV series and character licensing and owns/controls more than 50 original works.

Properties include *Gatchaman*, *The Genie Family* and *Mach Go, Go, Go* (*Speed Racer*).

"Nippon TV believes that adding Tatsunoko Production to its group of companies will enable it to strategically enhance its remake and content businesses going forward," Nippon TV said.



**WORLD
SPORTS**
CONTENT MEDIA
CONVENTION
www.sportelasia.com

Sportel
ASIA

With the support of



INTERNATIONAL
OLYMPIC
COMMITTEE

**3-5 MARCH
2014**
KERRY HOTEL
PUDONG, SHANGHAI

**PRINCIPALITY
OF MONACO**

PLAYING A SPECIAL ROLE IN THE WORLD.

Disney boosts SE Asia advertising
Baillie drives new media solutions initiative

Disney's U.K.-based sales/relationships exec, Alex Baillie, is shifting to Singapore to join The Walt Disney Company Southeast Asia as executive director, media solutions. Baillie reports to Amit Malhotra, general manager, Disney Media Distribution, and will be responsible for advertising sales and promotions working across the integrated Disney Southeast Asia. This includes the Disney channels, studios, retail and licensing, and interactive. Baillie joined Disney in 2008 as director, international and digital based in London.

Live leap for Discovery Asia Pac joins focus on wingsuit jumper off Everest

Discovery Asia Pacific is joining the network's global focus on daredevil Joby Ogwyn in May with a live broadcast of the first wing suit flight off the summit of Mount Everest.

Everest Jump Live includes two one-hour pre-shows tracking Ogwyn's training for the climb and jump. The special culminates in a live two-hour broadcast of the final summit climb and the plunge from the top.

The custom-built wing suit is equipped with cameras that will record the 10,000-foot vertical dive.



Cheo Yong: The Paranormal Detective, CJ E&M

Korean CJ E&M expands drama themes
New detective series rides paranormal trend

CJ E&M's latest effort to expand Korean Wave story lines rolled out at the weekend, with the Sunday night premiere of new original drama, *Cheo Yong: The Paranormal Detective*. The series airs on CJ E&M's dedicated drama channel OCN.

The series, starring Oh Ji-Ho as detective Yoon and Jun Hyo-Seong from K-pop girl group Secret, also tracks the country's booming taste for sci-fi and the supernatural, CJ E&M's drama production team head, Park Ho-Sik, says.

Park stresses CJ E&M's ongoing search for diverse and original themes for Korean drama and says new production techniques and idea development are designed to attract a modern generation of viewers.

CJ E&M titles already riding the super-

natural trend include *Nine: Nine Times Time Travel*, as well as the fantasy dramas *Who Are You*, *Master's Sun* and *My Love from the Star*.

Cheo Yong tells the story of detective Yoon Cheo-Yong who has the unique ability to see, listen, and touch ghosts. He investigates unsolved cases with a female 'high-schooler' ghost, Han Na-Young (Jun Hyo-Seong), and a young and passionate colleague Ha Sun-Woo (Oh Ji-Eun).

The series' title is derived from a Korean myth about an extraordinary man living in ancient Silla who is believed to have had the power to defeat the goddess of smallpox.



contentasiamobile

Who's who, what they do, where to contact them
All in ContentAsia's *The Big List* directory app.
Available free for a limited time.



ContentAsia's new regular section, ContentAsia Formats, is dedicated to 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.

Hidden Cities Extreme

A+E Networks' factual format, *Hidden Cities Extreme*, returns to Asia at the end of this month with bigger stories, and promises of even more challenging antics and off-the wall discoveries by host, actor/filmmaker Simon Yin.

The second season of *Hidden Cities Extreme* (8x30 mins), produced by Singapore-based Beach House Pictures, premieres on History and History HD on 25 February 2014 and airs Tuesdays at 10pm.

Season two's adventures include rat catching in the Philippines, drinking cow urine in India, ninja training in Japan and swallowing coconut worms in Mongolia.

Season one in 2012 rated number one in its timeslot among 25+ audiences in Singapore (source: Kantar Media Singapore). In Malaysia, the Korea episode was the top show on History in 2012, with a combined average audience of 107,000 in its slot for Astro 15+ on both SD and HD channels.

A+E Networks Asia's production director, Chris Humphrey, says the network's strategy includes developing "our own original, tradable formats as well as leveraging the format activities of our own channels in the U.S."

"In many aspects TV is still tied to local and national culture, so the demand for local content is still very strong. We need to find and make television programmes that our audiences find locally appealing yet



Hidden Cities Extreme

globally relevant," he adds.

While many formats work well in that the network can deliver locally produced programmes with well-established track records, the challenge can be translating some of A+E Networks' hit U.S. formats for Asia.

Character-driven series, for instance, are heavily dependent on casting. "Asia's value system varies greatly from that of the U.S., and our viewers' attitudes toward family life, education, physical contact and of course religion mean we have to approach the format space differently," he adds.

Formats such as *My Ghost Story* work because the series is interview-led and there is a very strong regional interest in the super-

natural, he says. U.S. hit *Dance Moms* has proven a lot more difficult to format.

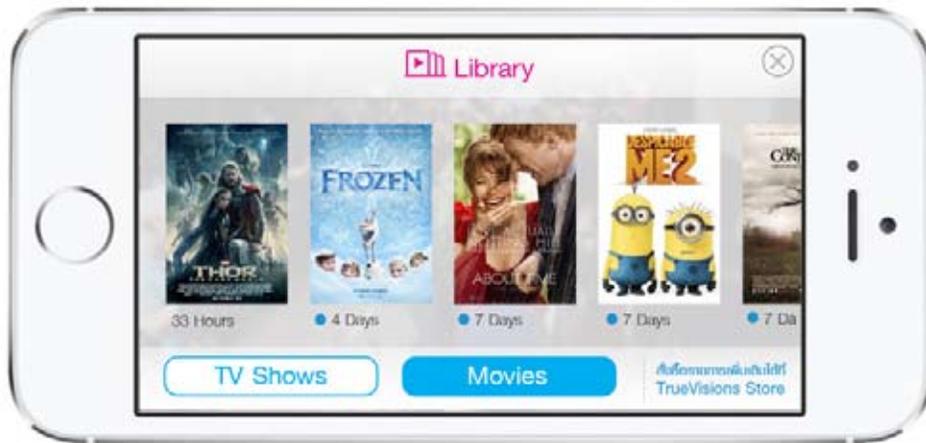
"Although our audience may like watching *Dance Moms*, Asian parents never want to voluntarily show their ugly side on TV, let alone have their own child's worst moments broadcast all around the world. We certainly have to pick and choose what we think will work here and what won't," Humphrey says.

Will *Hidden Cities Extreme* be followed by more formats on the channel this year than last? "We certainly hope so," Humphrey says, adding: "It takes a bit of time to get these things off the ground but we're working on it."

contentasia
FORMATS

at the ContentAsia Summit. September 2014. Be included. Contact CJ at cj@contentasia.tv

PLATFORM TRUE VISIONS ANYWHERE



In a regular section looking at up and coming platforms in Asia, **Malena Amzah** speaks to Soothi Na-Ranong, Thailand's TrueVisions Group senior manager, product development, business development.

What is TrueVisions Anywhere? An online TV service, offering live-TV streaming and catch-up services of local and international channels. TrueVisions Anywhere is accessible for free to TrueVisions' pay-TV subscribers via web browsers and mobile iOS and Android apps. Chargeable for non-subscribers. Currently not supported on Symbian and Blackberry OS

Been around since... Launched in 2012, with live streaming of 40 local and international channels. Relaunched in May 2013 with 120 channels

Targeting... All demographics

Pricing... Non-subscribers pay THB200/US\$6 a month for the basic package, consisting of 53 local and two international channels. Five TrueVisions-branded channels are offered for free to the public

Who's driving the initiative... Nantanee

Wongumnitkul, business development director and Soothi Na-Ranong, senior manager product development, TrueVisions Group

Available right now in... Thailand and hopes to extend to Burma, Vietnam and Cambodia

The offering... Live streaming of more than 150 local and international channels. Features include time-shift (rewind live TV up to two hours) and catch-up TV (two days archive)

What would you like to add to the offering? A video on-demand service by mid February 2014 offering Hollywood movies. The plan is to launch with 100 movie titles, including *Thor* and *Frozen*, and ramp up to 170 movies by mid 2014. The aim is to have 10 new, current titles each month.

What's the goal? "The goal is to minimise

piracy and ultimately be the sole legal on-line TV application provider in Thailand."

What kind of rights do you buy? "We're hoping for first and exclusive."

The biggest challenge... "Piracy, because the people in Thailand are so used to pirated services that are either cheap or free. We need to find an appropriate business model to win this competition. Business model in terms of the right pricing and exclusivity (content), accessible everywhere in Thailand and a user interface design that is simple and easy to use by all ages."

Why did you call it TrueVisions Anywhere? "It is straightforward and simple to understand by all."

How many subscribers or registered users do you have? "400,000 downloads and currently 90,000 registered subscribers (watching the channels they subscribe to)."

What are your take-up expectations for 2014? 180,000 registered subscribers by end 2014

What's the average viewing time? 10-15 minutes daily

The biggest surprise? "We found that our users are mostly children."

How are you using social media to expand your online presence? "We have our own social media team consisting of six people. We have about 480,000 likes to our Facebook page, where we also promote our content to watch on Anywhere. We are also on TrueVisions' official Twitter and Instagram."

interview W CREATIVE

Amit Malhotra, General Manager, Disney Media Distribution,
The Walt Disney Company Southeast Asia

The title of your session at the Creative Content Production Conference* is: One story, multiple screens, countless eyeballs. What does this mean right now in Asia for Disney? "We constantly push ourselves to challenge the status quo and are focused on finding new ways to deliver our content to more people and on more platforms across markets (whether that is TV, mobile phone, tablet or online). We work closely with our local partners to find new media platforms to meet consumers' desires to receive content when they want it and how they want it."

Marvel's Avengers franchise is one of the examples you use... "Following the astounding box-office success of *Iron Man 3* in 2013, the title has been made available on premium VOD and PPV services as well as on gaming platforms such as the Avengers Alliance game. Crossovers have also done very well in the case of *P&F: Mission Marvel*, which generated very high ratings when it premiered on Disney Channel. It also premiered on Fox Movies Premium for the Chinese New Year weekend in most markets and will air soon on Disney Channel and other pay-TV networks and our partner free-to-air channels."

What are the biggest challenges facing rights holders in Asia right now? "New technologies and how they enable and affect consumer behaviour have made the business model increasingly complex yet extremely exciting. Multi-screen is now not just a matter of putting the same content (linear or VOD) onto another screen beyond the TV set. For example, there are systems that can take the content and create so many different ways of watching it – fast forward,

“While technology is an enabler, content is still a key to consumer engagement...”



playback archiving, selecting/sorting, essentially allowing the viewer to re-programme a channel or to create and customise one at will, using technologies like cloud services to deliver a compelling experience. While technology is an enabler, content is still a key to consumer engagement."

You see this as opportunity than challenge... "We curate our library of content, customising to the needs of new emerging digital platforms and managing the needs and preferences of consumers. Hence, we have digital products that cater specifically to these digital platforms. Disney Movies on Demand, ABC TV on Demand as well as Disney Channel on Demand are a few examples of how we have done this successfully."

You can obviously draw on sophisticated digital development teams in the U.S. How much digital input does the team in Asia have? "Other than the user interface, which is centrally invested in to create a world-class experience and look and feel, everything else is available for us to customise. We have multiple language tracks on our apps, which are locally developed. Content-wise, we have full discretion on programming, which will always be attuned to local preference to make the Disney experience as relevant and engag-

ing to our viewers. And ultimately, we work closely with local affiliates to allow seamless authentication of users and coordinated marketing efforts. For example, Watch Disney Channel, Watch DJ and Watch DXD are available in English, Mandarin and Bahasa Malay. VOD content is also customised based on the preference of the consumer in market."

What do you see as the evolution of the Disney-branded apps in Asia? "As consumers in Asia become even more tech-savvy, there is going to be a greater demand for apps and the availability of content online and on-the-go. We also know that apps create greater engagement among users; the likelihood for them to engage with a piece of content has been much higher. We are focused on making the Disney experience more personal and engaging through increased branded environments, including apps for consumers."

** Amit Malhotra will be speaking at this year's Creative Content Production Conference, which runs in Singapore from 18-19 June alongside BroadcastAsia and CommunicAsia.*

This interview has been edited for space; the full interview is at www.contentasia.tv

from page one: Thailand

Gold), ATP tour and WTA tour.

From the beIN Sports camp come promises of ATP 250 tennis events, RBS Six Nations rugby, and Spanish Basketball League (Liga Endesa) along with Asian properties such as the Asian Beach Games 2014.

The TrueVisions launch is beIN Sports' first exposure in Thailand. In Asia, the brand has so far signed carriage deals in Indonesia, Taiwan, Hong Kong and the Philippines.

The new launch boosts TrueVisions' sports channels to 30.

The beIN Sports announcement came about a week after CTH announced a tie up with Grammy's pay-TV outfit GMM Z on an English Premier League (EPL) football package.

GMM Z will market CTHZ Premier League+ HD for THB999/US\$30 a month and the companies will share revenue. Details of the revenue split have not been made public.

The pack includes six EPL channels as well as 35 pay-TV channels from Fox International Channels (FIC).

The Grammy tie-up follows reports that CTH had missed its EPL revenue target of THB3 billion/US\$91 million by about THB1 billion/US\$30 million.

CTH is said to have paid about US\$250 million for the EPL, shocking a market more familiar with the platform as a loose structure of smaller regional operators.

This was followed in May last year with the announcement that CTH would pay Fox International Channels (FIC) US\$84 million in a multi-year carriage deal for about 23 channels.

FIC's new non-exclusive strategy in Thailand found little support at long-time partner



Josh Holloway in *Intelligence*, RTL CBS Entertainment

TrueVisions, which started dropping FIC channels as soon as contracts expired.

Both sides say they are open to negotiations, but nothing has been made public for the past 10 months.

TrueVisions, meanwhile, acquired exclusive rights for Thai Premier League for the next three years, and has picked up indie and other channels, including Outdoor Channel, Motorvision and Manchester United channel MUTV. The additional sports services are being offered at no extra charge to subscribers.

TrueVisions' chief programme and content officer, Attaphon Na Bangxang, says the sports rallying cry going forward includes "Cheer Thai" in support of Thai athletes. "Our heroes currently hold championship titles in many tournaments. We have exclusive, world-class events for golf, badminton, volleyball and Muay Thai, where Thai fans can follow our national team and players in international events," he says.

TrueVisions is also fighting

hard on the family and entertainment front, working with The Walt Disney Company Southeast Asia on a Thai version of Disney XD. Disney XD is part of a broader deal that also includes the first Thai-language versions of Disney Junior and Disney, and expanded nationwide reach for the Disney Channel. TrueVisions says this is the first time an international network is being offered to subscribers of every pay package.

More recently, TrueVisions added general entertainment channel RTL CBS Entertainment to its entertainment line up.

The TrueVisions/beIN Sports announcement co-incided with news that CTH is reshaping its deal with local cable operators (LCOs). CTH has told local media that partnerships with LCOs have been pared down from 170 to 100. Insiders say low-revenue relationships are being jettisoned as the platform moves from the original focus on the regions into a mainstream play and goes after higher-value alliances and audiences.

CONTENT ASIA

Editorial Director

Janine Stein

Assistant Editor

Malena Amzah

malena@contentasia.tv

Production Assistant

CJ Yong

cj@contentasia.tv

Design

Rae Yong

artwork@contentasia.tv

Associate Publisher

(Americas, Europe) and VP, International Business Development

Leah Gordon

leah@contentasia.tv

Sales and Marketing (Asia)

Masliana Masron

mas@contentasia.tv

To receive your regular free copy of ContentAsia, please email i_want@contentasia.tv

Published fortnightly by:
Pencil Media Pte Ltd
730A Geylang Road
Singapore 389641
Tel: +65 6846-5987
contentasia.tv
asiacontentwatch.com



Twitter @ContentAsia

Copyright 2014 Pencil Media Pte Ltd. All Rights Reserved.
MICA (P) 111/06/2013