

Fox Asia unveils new sports story *Three channel shift all set for 15 August*

Fox International Channels (FIC) Asia moves another step into its wholly owned sports future in August this year with three repositioned sports brands and a "seriously visible upgrade" both on and off screen.

Fox Sports, Fox Sports 2 and Fox Sports 3 roll out across the region on 15 August in both standard definition and HD.

These replace the previous versions of Fox Sports as well as Fox Sports Plus HD and Star Sports everywhere except China and South Korea, where Star Sports will continue to be offered.

Fox Sports News and Fox Football Channel HD remain unchanged, as do the network's non-linear offerings – Fox Sports Play and Fox Sports Mobile.

Each of the new brands will cater to distinct groups of sports fans, says Joon Lee, FIC Asia's executive vice president, content and communications, APAC and Middle East and managing director, Hong Kong and Southeast Asia.

Coming two years after the end of the ESPN Star Sports joint venture, the latest branding is aimed at going even bigger with the Fox Sports brand.

More simply, "we inherited the Star Sports brand and it's confusing to have the two with distinctions that are not clear enough," Lee says. "It's essential for us to come up with a network under one brand, which is Fox Sports," he adds.

The August rebrand is about more than name changes, Lee says. The three channels go forward as "unique channels and with their own identifiers".

The new Fox Sports' tagline is "Home of the Best" with properties such as the English Premier League, UFC, Tennis Grand Slam

The rest of the story is on page five.

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FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH
ContentAsia's take on industry events in the Year of the Horse

The top two things on our watch list these days are: 1. Turner's announcement of its widely speculated about deal with Korea's MBC for... maybe a Korean channel a la Sony's One, which Turner's new-ish boss Ricky Ow drove when he still worked for Sony Pics in Singapore. Is there space in the market for another Korean drama/entertainment? Hell yes. And probably another one after that, and then another one. It was MBC, remember, which made all-time-favourite *Jewel in the Palace*, and the magic hasn't faded. MBC, by the way, is bringing back its precious *Jewel* later this year for a second season. Definitely one to watch.

2. BBC Worldwide's announcement about who's going to replace Mark Whitehead in Asia. Our money is on BBC stalwart Monty Ghai, who was part of the channels' start-up team in Asia, when home was a showhouse in Singapore's Club Street and the BBC brand equalled news. Whitehead takes up the reigns of Viacom International Media Networks in Asia, following in the footsteps of Indra Suharjono, who exited at the end of June.



Grace

HBO Asia will premiere new original mini-series, *Grace*, on Friday, 17 October, with a two-hour finale scheduled for Halloween on 31 October.

On-demand streaming service, HBO Go, will make the four-part series available one hour after the TV broadcast.

Catch-up/on-demand platform, HBO On Demand, will offer *Grace* episodes on the Monday following the telecast on HBO and HBO HD.

The series will air in English and Mandarin across HBO Asia's feeds, with local-language subtitles in selected territories.

Grace, directed by Tony Tilse (*Serangoon Road*, *Farscape*) was developed by HBO Asia's Singapore-based in-house team under programming vice president, Erika North. The series stars Russel Wong (*Serangoon Road*, *Romeo Must Die*), Taiwan's Teresa Daley (*Transformers: Age of Extinction*), Constance Song (*Point of Entry*) and Pamelyn Chee (*Little Nonya*).

Produced with Singapore production

company, Infocus Asia, with the support of Singapore's

Media Development Authority (MDA), *Grace* is the story of a father's mistake, which condemns his family to unspeakable horror. The mini-series is set in today's urban Asia and examines the concepts of family, sacrifice and vengeance.

Speaking at the Creative Content Production Conference during BroadcastAsia/CommunicAsia in Singapore in June, North said organic stories that couldn't be told anywhere else were a driver for HBO Asia's local production ambitions.

"We don't want to be creating content that you could spend more money on and do a better job elsewhere," she said.

Oct premiere for HBO Asia's *Grace* Premium movie-caster returns to horror for new original series



Erika North



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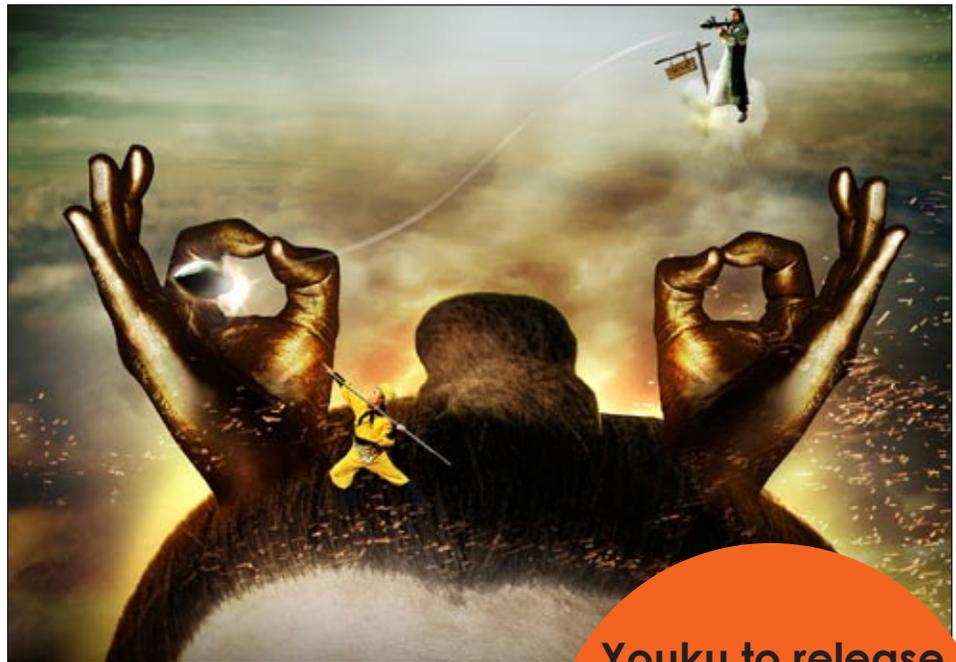
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Tiny Times premieres on Youku in July

Mainland online platform Youku Tudou has started uploading 20 original shows, including drama, to its sites as part of what it says is an ongoing effort to offer unique entertainment.

The titles are produced by Youku Tudou's in-house production unit, and the slate includes reality, talk shows and drama series.

The platform said this month that the content would be released throughout the second half of 2014. The first title, released in June, was *Searching Divas*, which Youku says attracted more than 10 million views within 10 days.

Searching Divas, modeled after the popular South Korean reality show *Running Man*, features contestants who compete against each other to complete challenging tasks and missions. Winners get to meet their favourite Chinese celebrities.

The new slate also includes four talk shows and drama such as *Tiny Times*, which is based on the film about young, upwardly mobile Chinese and their lives in modern-day China. *Tiny Times* premieres in July. Another original drama

**Youku to release
20 originals in
2H 2014**
*Chinese platform's
aggressive drive for
unique content*

is *Midnight Taxi*, which Youku put in the hands of a Japanese director.

"Our customised content in the emerging online entertainment industry is vitally important to Youku Tudou's continued leadership in the internet television space," says Zhu Xiangyang, Youku Tudou's chief content officer. "To create a multi-screen, entertainment ecosystem is one of our most important strategic initiatives."

Youku.com president, Wei Ming, says that by combining traditional television programming with the internet, "we are continuing to promote an entirely new industry chain that will redefine China's online entertainment space".

Youku Tudou began producing its own content in 2009. Web shows include *Hip Hop Quartets*, *Old Boys*, *On the Road* and *Surprise*.

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Nikkatsu, Nippon TV, Kantana seal production JV

Japan's Nikkatsu has tied up with Japanese broadcaster Nippon TV and Thai entertainment giant Kantana in a joint venture to develop global film production workflows.

The new Southeast Asia-based venture, Kantana Japan Corporation, will drive computer graphics production in Japan as well as animation co-production and other production-related businesses.

Kantana Japan Corporation is capitalised at ¥100 million/US\$987,000. Media house Nikkatsu owns 51%, Kantana Group 39% and Nippon TV 10%.

The three companies said on Monday, 30 June, that "the establishment of this joint venture is a culmination of Kantana Group's vision to expand their presence in Japan and the rest of Asia, combined with Nikkatsu's and Nippon TV's strategy to develop new businesses in the areas of computer graphics and animation production".

Universal seals day-and-date rights to The Librarians

Universal Channel will air Electric Entertainment's action-adventure TV series, *The Librarians*, across Asia within 24 hours of its debut on TNT in the U.S. in December this year. The Asia rights are part of a global deal.

The series, based on the movie trilogy, stars Noah Wyle (*Falling Skies, ER*) and Rebecca Romijn (*X-Men*) as members of an ancient organisation dedicated to protecting the world's mystical treasures, including the Ark of the Covenant and the Spear of Destiny.

The Librarians also stars Christian Kane (*Leverage*), Lindy Booth (*Dawn of the Dead*) and John Kim (*The Pacific*).



Lionel Messi of FC Barcelona in action in a Liga BBVA match on Fox Sports



Joon Lee

semi-finals and finals and F1 main races.

Fox Sports will target mass audiences, fully localised with a mass market schedule segmented by day parts. In Indonesia, for instance, the top property will be badminton, fully localised on the ground at FIC in Jakarta, with Indonesian commentary, players, coaches and local promos.

"We want Fox Sports to be the main channel for everyone – women, men, kids, family, not just at 11pm-at-the-bar kind of channel," Lee says, adding: "We want to make this a symbol of our vision and mission, which is to bring sports closer to the eyes of Asian audiences".

Fox Sports 2 goes forward with a "Hit & Run" remit designed to be the "go-to" channel for athletics and ball and racquet sports, such as Major League Baseball, Indian Badminton League and International Amateur Athletics Federation events.

Fox Sports 3 is FIC's "Feel the Rush" channel, with "adrenaline-fueled" motorsports, combat and extreme sports such as F1, MotoGP, One FC and Extreme Games Asia.

The Star Sports brand in China and South Korea, which share a feed, will continue for the moment. In China, the channel's distribution is, like all legal foreign channels, in hotels and foreign compounds. In Korea, Fox also has a joint venture with SBS

to distribute the SBS Fox Sports Channel.

Many of the content upgrades in the August rebrand are being driven out of FIC's facility in Singapore, which Lee calls "one of the symbols of our new direction" and part of FIC's ongoing commitment to "meeting a global standard". Original sports show, *Fox Sports Central*, is delivered out of the new studio.

Online/multi-platform is another of FIC's key and ongoing commitments. "We want to change the way sports is digested and consumed in Asia and one of the key areas is digital," Lee says, adding that the new grand digital plan will go beyond the current "decent catch-up and mobile streaming".

Simon Thomas, FIC's global EVP of sports and content, says the digital plan is all about "enhancing and extending the local experience and interaction" and sharing experiences and best practices across FIC's global network.

Lee's bigger goal is to develop sports into a major genre in Asia and to drive broader viewership. "My real competition is the lack of interest by local audiences," he says, adding that his aim is to "change the way sports is being broadcast and presented in Asia".



Satellite stuff...

India's Polar satellite launch vehicle headed for space on Monday, 30 June, carrying with it small satellites from France, Germany, Canada and Singapore. France's Earth Observation Satellite Spot-7 is the main payload on the five-satellite lift off.

Thunderbird sneaks

ITV Studios has released a sneak peak at the reimagined Thunderbird-1 rocket, which features in TV co-pro *Thunderbirds*



are Go! The action-adventure kids series with New Zealand's Pukeko Pictures in association with Weta Workshop (*The Lord of the Rings*, *Avatar*) debuts internationally in early 2015.

i-Cable has a laugh

Hong Kong's i-Cable added Viacom's Comedy Central Asia to its entertainment pack on 27 June. The service debuted on the platform with *Punk'd* season nine.

ABS-CBN drives mobile take up
No end to Kath, network promises

Philippines' broadcaster ABS-CBN is promising fans of teen queen Kathryn Bernardo that her mobile-only lifestyle show will remain live following the end of series two on 21 June.

The exclusive ABS-CBNmobile show, *experienceKathryn in 15 days*, features Bernardo's "kikay style" and all things "Kath approved", including her favourite clothes, what's inside her wallet, stuff about her family, and other tidbits she hasn't shared in public before.

The series is available through ABS-CBN's iWant TV and iWant Stars for Kathryn Android or iOs apps, and is accessible only to users with an ABS-CBNmobile SIM card.

The made-for-mobile teen show is part of ABS-CBN's mobile subscription drive. Subscribers have to use ei-



ther a mobile promo code or maintain a balance of Ps10/US\$0.23.

experienceKathryn in 15 days follows ABS-CBN's *experienceDaniel in 30 days*, which followed teen idol Daniel Padilla.

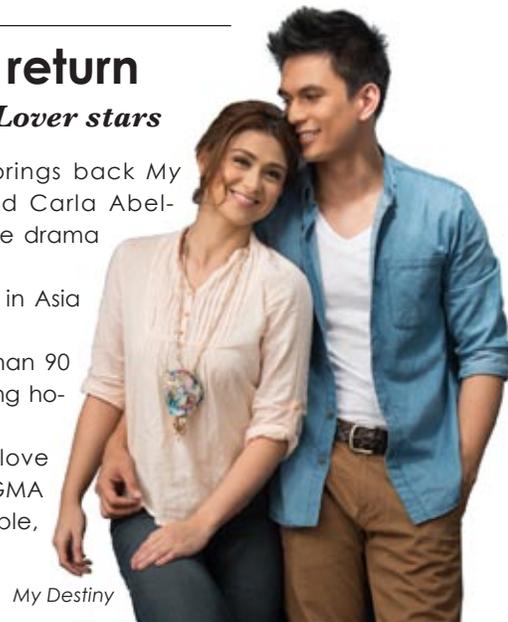
Abellana & Rodriguez return
GMA brings back My Husband's Lover stars

Philippines' national broadcaster GMA brings back *My Husband's Lover* stars Tom Rodriguez and Carla Abellana on Monday, 30 June, in new prime-time drama *My Destiny*.

The premiere on GMA's Pinoy TV networks in Asia Pacific and the Middle East follows on 1 July.

My Husband's Lover, which ran for more than 90 episodes, made headlines last year for tackling homosexuality and infidelity in prime time.

My Destiny, billed as a sweeping story of love and sacrifice, was created in-house by the GMA Drama group headed by Lilybeth G. Rasonable, senior vice president for entertainment TV.



My Destiny

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Screens explode, but World Cup innovation lacking, new study

The FIFA World Cup is – unsurprisingly – the most accessible in the tournament's history, but innovation in the viewing experience is "somewhat lacking" and online providers need to be wary of breaking the TV Everywhere promise, according to a new research report by Ovum.

Broadcast and streaming services are available on up to 5.9 billion screens globally, and PCs, tablets, and smartphones are providing alternatives to conventional TV viewing, accounting for 57% of all screens, the report says.

This year's disappointments include 4K ultra-HD. TV set manufacturers and related industries were hoping the World Cup would drive sales of ultra-HD hardware. Didn't happen, and Ovum says the reliability of online streams versus traditional broadcasts "remains a concern".

"Having set consumer expectations for TV Everywhere, providers must now deliver on the promise of their offerings," says Ovum senior analyst, Ted Hall, warning of fan frustration and bad press.

"While viewing live events online is improving, there is some way to go before it can compare with the reliability traditional TV distribution offers for the largest audiences," Hall adds.

With fans keen to watch matches on the biggest screens and in the highest resolution, Ovum stresses the importance of traditional broadcasting for attracting the largest audiences and generating the most value for rights holders.

Casbaa applauds Hong Kong raids

Asian pay-TV association Casbaa has applauded Hong Kong's initiatives to stamp out pirate set-top boxes, saying that customs officials had "uncovered a criminal fact pattern and acted upon it decisively".

Customs authorities raided four residential premises, a warehouse and a commercial electronics stall, arresting nine people suspected to have conspired with

others to operate an illegal "circumvention business" to access pay-TV content illegally and distribute it around the world via the internet, for payment.

Casbaa's chief policy officer, John Meireiros, said there is an important lesson for consumers as well as potential criminals: "Dodgy boxes give dodgy results... They are bad for consumers and bad for the creative industries."

What the numbers say: Taiwan OTT vs the rest of Asia Pacific

Taiwan has the lowest penetration rate disparity between pay-TV (79.4%) and broadband services (70.6%) in Asia Pacific at the end of 2013, SNL Kagan says,

adding that it believes there will still be medium- to long-term OTT opportunities generated by the country's major broadcasters.

Market	TV HHs	Multichannel Subscribers	BB HHs	Multichannel Subs/TV HHs (%)	BB HHs/ b/w MC (%)	% Gap	Share of Cable BB HHs (%)	Share of DSL BB HHs (%)	Multichannel Dominant Platform (%)	Affordability: Dominant Platform (%)
China	398,840,300	253,681,280	155,703,000	63.6	37.1	(26.5)	4.4	70.7	0.4	
India	143,142,872	133,709,021	18,918,528	93.4	8.1	(85.3)	5.2	82.8	0.7	
Japan	49,414,644	14,572,118	37,450,112	29.5	75.6	46.1	17.2	10.9	1.4	
Indonesia	42,612,688	3,258,065	4,310,359	7.7	6.4	(1.3)	10.4	82.9	3.5	
Thailand	21,419,732	2,295,697	4,466,083	10.7	20.4	9.7	9.5	86.3	1.2	
South Korea	18,328,206	24,911,586	17,771,964	135.9	96.1	(39.8)	27.0	10.4	0.3	
Philippines	15,864,339	2,466,785	2,575,995	15.6	12.3	(3.3)	5.2	64.5	1.8	
Australia	8,383,444	2,545,239	6,106,720	30.4	72.3	41.9	15.3	78.9	2.5	
Taiwan	8,097,102	6,426,310	5,866,477	79.4	70.6	(8.8)	19.6	45.0	0.7	
Malaysia	6,571,890	3,735,904	1,984,034	56.9	28.4	(28.4)	0.2	66.6	2.1	
Hong Kong	2,375,532	2,216,859	2,160,799	93.3	90.0	(3.4)	9.1	20.9	0.4	
New Zealand	1,627,181	893,680	1,405,639	54.9	85.7	30.7	5.0	89.2	2.0	
Singapore	1,211,174	958,474	1,154,837	79.1	95.0	15.8	46.5	22.8	0.4	

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* As of December 2013.

U.S. studios go after unauthorised Korean subtitlers

U.S. studios have gone legal on the creators of unauthorised Korean subtitles, saying the right to subtitle is protected by copyright, according to local media reports.

The suits against 15 online subtitlers, who distributed the subtitled episodes online,

are being brought by six U.S. drama producers, including Warner Bros and 20th Century Fox.

Under Korean law, unauthorised producers can be jailed for five years or fined, according to *The Korea Times*.

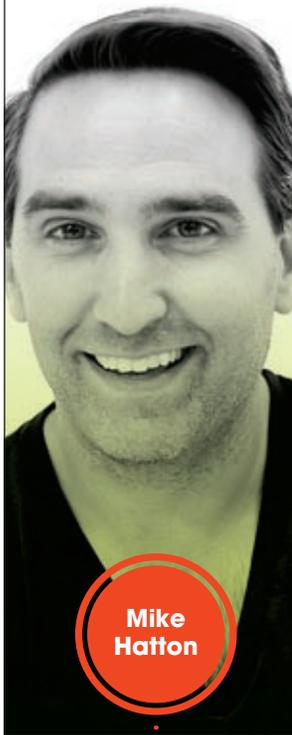


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Social media & how traditional news organisations in Asia are working the new landscape will be one of the discussion topics at DW's Global Media Forum in Bonn this week. We did a little homework to see how – and how much – news brands are doing on Twitter...

		Origin	Followers	No of tweets
CNN Breaking News	@cnnbrk	U.S.	17,200,000	33,000
CNN	@CNN	U.S.	13,100,000	45,500
The New York Times	@nytimes	U.S.	12,200,000	139,000
BBC Breaking News	@BBCBreaking	U.K.	10,200,000	19,300
BBC News (World)	@BBCWorld	U.K.	6,560,000	172,000
The Onion	@TheOnion	U.S.	5,960,000	29,600
Perez Hilton	@PerezHilton	U.S.	5,930,000	209,000
TIME.com	@TIME	U.S.	5,850,000	86,500
Wall Street Journal	@WSJ	U.S.	4,600,000	84,000
Reuters Top News	@Reuters	U.S.	4,500,000	103,000
Huffington Post	@HuffingtonPost	U.S.	4,270,000	337,000
Fox News	@FoxNews	U.S.	3,990,000	177,000
The Associated Press	@AP	U.S.	3,400,000	83,700
ABC News	@ABC	U.S.	3,300,000	90,600
Al Jazeera English	@AJEnglish	Qatar	1,970,000	125,000
NBC News	@NBCNews	U.S.	1,580,000	36,800
Bloomberg News	@BloombergNews	U.S.	1,550,000	73,000
ABS-CBN News	@ABSCBNNews	Philippines	1,540,000	238,000
Sky News	@SkyNews	U.K.	1,390,000	106,000
Guardian News	@guardiannews	U.K.	1,280,000	77,800
Yahoo News	@YahooNews	U.S.	797,000	66,200
The Hindu	@the_hindu	India	739,000	70,000
Asahi Shimbun	@asahi	Japan	707,000	82,600
The Independent	@Independent	U.K.	682,000	68,000
Daily Mail Online	@MailOnline	U.K.	623,000	116,000
The Sun	@TheSunNewspaper	U.K.	554,000	28,800
ThaiPBS	@ThaiPBS	Thailand	489,000	111,000
Economic Times India	@EconomicTimes	India	365,000	101,000
The Star	@staronline	Malaysia	364,000	165,000
The Jakarta Post	@jakpost	Indonesia	310,000	96,500
The Straits Times	@STcom	Singapore	306,000	110,000
The Jakarta Globe	@thejakartaglobe	Indonesia	247,000	75,500
The Sydney Morning Herald	@smh	Australia	223,000	72,900
Malaysiakini	@malaysiakini	Malaysia	219,000	66,700
Bernamea	@bernamadotcom	Malaysia	215,000	38,600
The Australian	@australian	Australia	178,000	44,600
Daily Mirror	@DailyMirror	U.K.	158,000	94,900
Philstar.com	@PhilstarNews	Philippines	157,000	102,000
news.com.au	@newscomauHQ	Australia	115,000	87,500
Vice News	@vicenews	U.S.	109,000	4,944
BBC News US	@BBCNewsUS	U.S.	107,000	23,700
The Wire	@TheWire	U.S.	77,400	45,000
Telegraph World News	@TelegraphWorld	U.K.	63,800	42,300
Bangkok Post	@BPbreakingnews	Thailand	61,800	47,300
The Daily Telegraph	@dailytelegraph	Australia	59,100	127,000
Business Standard	@bsindia	India	55,500	51,400
South China Morning Post News	@SCMP_News	China	40,300	36,700
Japan Today	@JapanToday	Japan	29,200	55,500
Korea Herald	@TheKoreaHerald	Korea	20,100	23,400
DW.de	@DW_Germany	Germany	16,700	27,800
Manila Standard Today	@MStandardToday	Philippines	9,604	9,173
BorneoPost Online	@theborneopost	Malaysia	6,154	48,500
The Korea Times	@koreatimes1	Korea	2,185	7,830

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.

Dr. Oz Indonesia

Sony Pictures Television format, *Dr. Oz Indonesia*, could become free-TV network TransTV's first health talk show stripped seven days a week. As the show moves towards the 150 episode mark, station programmers are considering other changes too, including outdoor shoots, home visits and extending topics beyond food to, for instance, the danger of kitchen sponges.

Dr. Oz Indonesia currently airs on weekends from 3pm to 4pm. If it happens, the new schedule will strip the format across weekdays as well, albeit in a different time slot.

The local version of *Dr. Oz* premiered in Indonesia in 2013, introducing the health-lifestyle talk show genre to the mass market terrestrial network for the first time. Season two premiered on 19 April this year, with episode 122 aired in June.

"With our strong female viewership, why not try something that's different, unique and has massive potential?," asks Anselma Cynthia Purnama Sari, who takes care of programme acquisition for TransTV and Trans | 7.

"What could be better than a health show, remembering our economy is growing, higher buying power, more people growing from middle to upper class and they have started to 'care' about their health," she says, adding that yoghurt shops, zumba classes, yogalates, Thai boxing and "other girly



Dr. Oz Indonesia

more expensive sports inventions are sprouting".

The host so far has been Dr. Ryan Thamrin, chosen to appeal to TransTV's female demographic.

"Dr. Ryan Thamrin is not just an experienced doctor but his outer charm wins not only the eyes but the heart of our audiences. It's very rare to find a good-looking male doctor, who's not just experienced in his fields but has tremendous hosting and interpersonal skill," Purnama Sari says.

For TransTV, the Indonesian version has to be "simple, interesting and yet fast paced".

Purnama Sari says the station looks at topics such as beauty and lifestyle, "differently".

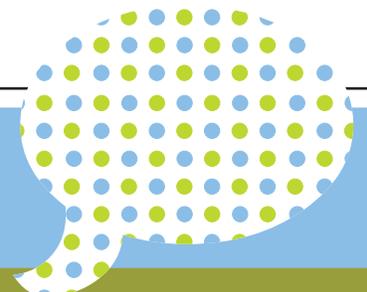
"For example, we do not discuss plastic

surgery. Instead we talk about 'the danger of high heels' and it works for our audience, because it is informative, it is interesting, it is relevant to them (who wear heels once in a while), plus it is chic..." she says.

Production challenges include fitting filming into Dr. Ryan's busy schedule and figuring out how extending the show to weekdays might work.

One of the options being considered is adding a second doctor to the line up.

Purnama Sari already has someone in mind: a female doctor with a strong interest in environmental issues. Will she be the second Dr. Oz? The answer to that is wait and see.



PLATFORM *VTV Plus*



In a regular section looking at up-and-coming platforms in Asia, *Malena Amzah* speaks to Dr Pham Anh Chien, director of Vietnam Television Digital Centre (MTV Digital).

What is VTV Plus? VTV Plus is an over-the-top (OTT) and second-screen TV application allowing users to watch TV content on multiple devices, including Android-, iOS-, window- and web-based devices. The aim is also to offer viewers interactivity over some of the live TV shows on VTV Plus.

Target users VTV Plus mostly targets youth and white-collar workers.

What is the average daily viewing time? One hour a day

Owned by Vietnam Television Cable Corporation and technology partner Medianet Corporation

Is the service geo-blocked? Most of the in-house content is available globally

Why did you call it "VTV Plus"? "We called it VTV Plus because we can bring to the online audience more than just online TV, in term of the content and the user experience. It is more than just a TV."

Launched Preparation took about

six months and the platform officially launched in January 2013.

What was your aim in creating VTV Plus? "Our aim is to personalise and improve TV user experiences. Moreover the internet infrastructure and the mobile market in Vietnam now are better and stronger, enabling our product to be available any time, any where and on any devices."

The offering 70 TV channels, including 40 VTV-branded channels. VTV Plus currently offers live streaming TV channels such as news, entertainment, sports and education channels. International channels include several digital Russian and Korean channels. The video-on-demand service will be available soon.

Subscription/pay-per-view rates Subscription is free for all VTV-branded TV channels and a list of Vietnamese in-house channels. Users pay US\$2 a month for a premium subscription package to

watch all 70 channels.

Three most-watched genres News, films and sports/football channels

What would you like to add? "We consider VTV Plus a cable TV service on-the-go. We hope to develop a new, customised, exclusive internet TV channel – maybe an entertainment or sports channel – featuring short-form content for mobile users."

Subscribers/registered users Over three million subscribers after one and a half years in operation

Take-up forecast by the end of 2014 Four million subscribers

Is there anything that has surprised you about the way people are using VTV Plus? "We got a lot of positive feedback from users because it is a brand new TV experience for them. They especially like to use the second-screen feature/VTV Plus for interaction with other users. There is also the time-shift viewing (12 hours). One example is the interactive feature we programmed on one of VTV6's entertainment quiz shows called *Happy Lunch*. Users were happy because with VTV Plus, they were able to discuss with one another and be entertained at the same time."

What's the biggest challenge you are facing in 2014? Copyright/piracy issues. "We are also facing infrastructure challenges. We need to prepare a strong backend structure to withstand peak hours, where there could be 100 times the number of viewer traffic on offpeak periods. We need to foresee technical challenges to ensure there is no interruption and the service runs perfectly."

The best thing that has happened to VTV Plus in Vietnam so far this year is... "There are more users using the service now not only in Vietnam but Vietnamese living around the world. VTV Plus is like their portable TV, TV on the go."



Rewind



Who was at... *Asian Food Channel's 10th birthday party in Singapore*



Derek Chang, Scripps Networks Interactive, Asia Pacific; celebrity chef Martin Yan; CheeK, Scripps Networks Interactive, Asia Pacific



Goh Seow Eng, Karen Lee, SingTel; Elise Ching, Scripps Networks Interactive, Asia Pacific



Christine Fellowes, NBC Universal, Asia Pacific; Hud Woodle, Scripps Networks Interactive



Cynthia Chong, MDA; Carl Zuzarte, Scripps Networks Interactive, Asia Pacific



Keh Li Ling, Angeline Poh, Media Development Authority (MDA) of Singapore



Sandie Lee, Rewind Networks



Birthday cake



Denise Keller



Vivian Yan, StarHub



Sarah Jacks, Scripps Networks Interactive; Paula Mason, BDA; Natalie Gee, Universal Networks Int'l

Who said what at... *the Creative Content Production Conference in Singapore in June*

“As programmers, sometimes we say ‘do we really have to do such a hard sell in our show?’ The answer is ‘yes, we really do’ because... we are selling branded environments [in the absence of a ratings platform that properly measures our audiences]. And if we don’t, our competitors will.”



Michele Schofield, Senior Vice President, Programming & Marketing, A+E Networks Asia

“Multiplatform is the 13th episode on a 12 episode series and costs as much.”



Robert Greenberg, Author, Screenwriter, Childrens Television Writing

“Digital panic on a movie set is contagious. You don’t want that.”

Steve Freebairn, Freehill Productions, talking about his experiences as the digital imaging person on the new Transformers movie.

“China is the formats place to be right now. The time is also right for original content in South-east Asia and China.”

Fotini Paraskakis, Endemol Asia

“Broadcasters want to know that your property has life for years. They don’t just want 52 episodes that they will eat through in six weeks.”

Steve Read, Co-founder, One Animation

“Cross bundling makes a rounded brand experience possible. It’s key to the Disney difference.”

“The end goal is the experience, and that’s all about the right content for the right platform.”

Amit Malhotra, Vice President & General Manager, The Walt Disney Company SEA

“If you cannot be mass, your budgets will always be low. You need a large niche.”

Abhigyan Jha, Chief Executive Officer and Founder, Undercover Productions



“We don’t just want offcuts that didn’t make it onto TV for our website... content has to be dedicated and ‘made for online’.”

Michele Schofield, A+E Networks Asia

“Digital deliverables will become a line on the budget, like it or not.”

Juan Foo, Producer Tai Pan Films

“Pan-regional production in Asia is very tough and there probably won’t be as many of these as anyone would like [in Asia] in the next year.”

“Singapore is not cheap anymore. Anyone who thinks that is in for a surprise.”

Michael McKay, activeTV

“There is a lot of advertiser related material we have to produce as well as TV, bordering on TVCs. This ‘whilst you are there’ needs budget.”

“Cheap & cheerful production gets content, but does it get viewers?”

Michael McKay, President, activeTV



“Thailand’s digital TV explosion is driving format buys in Thailand, where Endemol has eight new format deals.”

Fotini Paraskakis, Managing Director, Asian Operations, Endemol



“For transmedia, you have to layer and layer until you get to wow”.

We need to think of “moments” not “platforms”. “It takes no genius to know that stories have to be compelling.”

“Should everything go transmedia? Maybe not. It’s not that easy to create that kind of universe.”

Tony Chow, Chief Content Officer, The Brand Storey



Of pirates, fans, Popcorn Time & dynamic pricing...

Razmig Hovaghimian, co-founder and CEO of global streaming site Viki Inc and former senior vice president of NBC Universal's international division, explores what could happen if content owners turned pirates into gladly paying fans... P.S. Hovaghimian's views do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Viki, parent company Rakuten, or ContentAsia.

"At 36,007 feet up in the air, somewhere between Alaska and Russia, with the Aleutian Islands someplace below us, my child and I are sharing a blissful moment. My one-year-old is sleeping peacefully and I finally have an opportunity to catch up on *Game of Thrones*. I'm four episodes behind, and I need to see what happened in that trial by combat. I would pay dearly for each episode during this rare window of time, high above the Aleutians, but that's not even an option. It should be, though.

It's high time to bridge the gap between the needs of passionate fans and business. It's not a zero-sum problem, so:

Dear Studio Heads: I know you're not fans of disrupting your tried and tested distribution model: international geo-blocks and distribution holdback windows for releasing new TV shows and movies. I don't blame you. After all, a whole industry was built on carefully parsing out content rights.

But technology and passionate fandom can be punishing, and it has led to an MPAA reported US\$20+ billion a year piracy problem for the top U.S. studios alone. 25% of all internet traffic now goes to piracy – 5X growth in the last five years – and that pace of growth is picking up fast.

You've spent hundreds of millions of dollars on ad campaigns teasing out your latest releases, and you've left us fans needing our fix. Your stuff is good!

But instead of embracing pirates as fans, some of you turn to intimidation, threats of 10 years in jail, crackdowns, raids, eclipse attacks, hijacking browsers of paying customers, and on and on. Fun stuff. Pretty much all of your content is available online within a five-minute search anyway. Before bringing out the big guns, why not at least give fans the option to pay? The idea is simple: Think Popcorn Time, with dynamic pricing.

What if we give fans a choice to access what they want, when, where, and how they want it, but pay what you want to

even have to find them. They find you. That's the beauty of treating "pirates" as fans: untapped and concentrated demand. Beautiful.

Now assume you convert 5% of them to pay users (some would argue that the number is closer to 50%). Besides the NBCU study, a great deal of data shows that pirates would consider paying if they had a reasonably priced option, Australia aside as of now – don't ask. That's 37.5 million people. We're talking about the size of Netflix here. Now imagine if each of them generates a US\$5 ARPU (some can pay US\$1, and

“It's high time to bridge the gap between the needs of passionate fans and business.”

Razmig Hovaghimian, Viki/Rakuten

charge them?

I won't get into how Apple nailed it or the headway that many other startups in the space are making, but it's clear by now that access means a drop in piracy, and net growth in sales. Let's briefly look at the possible macro implications of working with fans.

An NBC Universal-funded study with Net-Names discovered that 432 million people worldwide "explicitly sought" copyright infringing content online. This was in January 2013, when the internet population was a third smaller than it is today. Adjust for Internet adoption and about 10% growth in piracy every year, and we could be looking at 750 million fans a month. This doesn't include those who searched for illegal content but didn't go through with it. 750 million. And growing. That's a third of the global online population. You don't

some US\$100) a month, and the revenues go into the billions. Even at 1% conversion, it's huge. Geo-block and leave out the 15% of them that are in the U.S., and that's still huge; and additive, where you don't trade volume for margin.

Popcorn Time is a manifestation of this massive demand, for what people really want. The platform is clean-cut, with one-click streaming of top shows. The kicker is that all the effort is crowdsourced for the fans, by the fans. You don't have to search for torrent files or figure out how to play them anymore. It's simpler than Netflix or HBO Go even. Pirates are even disrupting themselves.

Why not use a Popcorn Time-like technology and add dynamic pricing to create a market-clearing price for your content?

At a product level, think of Popcorn

...more on page 16

From page 15

Time, but with variable prices and hold-back windows that you get to control. Fans just pay for what they want per video stream. No ads, no subscriptions, and you can block any country you want, especially where theatre chains and cable companies still take you hostage. As an out, you can also choose to leave out some of your flagship titles (or recent seasons) until the economics make sense.

If you want to be adventurous, you can even start with content that is already illegally available online and just gate it.

The idea is neither a first nor is it novel. It's just the right time. Dynamic pricing isn't that complex, either. Take a page out of the e-commerce playbook and adjust for dozens of variables, from content recency, to country of viewership, to competitor pricing, to social chatter, to the number of torrents seeded or leeches, to the quality of the original video file, among many others. You can also track search terms and adjust prices in anticipation, or even involve the search giants to seed pay users and give them a cut. Both sides would win. You'd need kick-ass data scientists, and I wouldn't be surprised if you get a world-class team of volunteers lined up to work on it.

Would some fans pay US\$100 for a season of *Game Of Thrones* in a country where HBO is not available? Maybe. Would fans pay US\$50 for a simulcast of a new release if they're in Asia? Likely. How about US\$10 for a six-month-old title still not on Netflix? Yeah, for sure. Or two dollars in India? Yes, if not more.

Here's a fairly fresh example for just one show: BBC's *Happy Valley* was the No. 1 global trending topic on Twitter recently, yet one couldn't see it outside of the U.K. Six million people watched it in a week. That's 10% of the U.K. population. How would it have done had it been available with dynamic pricing, even after the U.K. broadcast ended, at US\$30 for the series of six episodes? Probably way more than they will make from the DVD (hint) sales that will be available this week.

Don't Let Fear Be Your Zugzwang. In order for it to work, when and where you

choose to make the content available, you have to go all in – with your latest and greatest shows, starting at the head of the curve. Make some of your long-tail shows, which you're not monetising anyway, available for free even, so you can up-sell fans on your newer shows. When you fine-tune this model, no part of it would be net cannibalising to your existing revenue base. Let technology help you reduce theft, reach new fans, and in the process, increase the size of the revenue pie for all involved in making your great content.

There are convenient reasons to say no, from the fear of setting a precedent of negotiating with pirates, to "breaking" what's working, or creating price transparency. You may even view this as your Zugzwang (in chess terms, as I know you play the long game); you'd rather pass when it's your turn, than make a move that would put you at a disadvantage.

Coming from both the studio and technology sides, let alone as a fan, I worry that the only wrong move here is not moving at all. You are fighting your adoring fans, especially fans that on average pay far more for your content than any other group. You turn them off, and that could be catastrophic.

When we spoke about this in L.A. last month, Mr. Head of Antipiracy at "Studio X", I felt we agreed, at least privately, that with calculated availability, not only can you eat into piracy, but also unlock significant revenues in the process. You know who you are.

Take the leap, man. Open this up. It may take just one "yes" to start. Okay, don't open up U.S. rights, and don't even shrink the international distribution windows for your core markets, but at least give us the rest of the world. I don't even mind waiting weeks for what I love. Studios and fans *are* actually on the same side. We've discussed this for years, and I've seen your cards. It's time. This "winter" is coming.

To the rest of us: keep embracing the madness and connecting the dots.

Signing out from the northernmost part of the Pacific Ring of Fire, where the Aleutians, Silicon Valley and Hollywood connect.

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