

HK's PCCW set for free-TV reveal *HK\$1.3 billion investment around HKTVE*

PCCW's free-TV unit, Hong Kong Television Entertainment (HKTVE), is set for its big brand reveal tomorrow (Tues, 20 Oct). Channel details come exactly two years after Hong Kong's broadcasting authorities approved two new free-TV licences for the Special Administrative Region.

China streaming clash intensifies *Alibaba launches \$3.5b bid for Youku Tudou*

Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba is going after the mainland's video entertainment hearts and wallets with a US\$3.5 billion bid to acquire online streaming platform Youku Tudou.

Story on page 2

The Voice of China busts ratings records *Record finale ends 13-week chart topper*

Star China Media is celebrating a record-breaking run for *The Voice of China* season four, which spent a record straight 13 weeks at the top of China's charts.

Story on page 3

The Walking Dead tops Fox charts *S6 opens high in four Asia markets*



Steven Yuen as Glenn Rhee in *The Walking Dead*

Fox International Channels' (FIC) *The Walking Dead* season six premiered internationally to a 17% year-over-year live ratings lift among viewers outside the U.S. The premiere garnered 4.3 million viewers for Fox, increasing last year's reach by 25%.

In Asia, the new season premiere put Fox in various top spots among different audience demos and pay-TV packages in Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan and Korea. Audience data for other markets was not available at presstime.

In both Malaysia and Singapore, the premiere was the highest rated of Fox's fall season dramas so far, beating blockbuster titles such as *Marvel's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.* 3 (1 October) and *Sleepy Hollow* season three (2 October). Other dramas that have premiered on FIC channels express from the U.S. this season are *Heroes Reborn* (25 September, Fox) and drama/comedy *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend* (13 Oct, Star World).

In Malaysia, *The Walking Dead* premiere on 12 October made Fox the number two

English-language general entertainment channel in the timeslot (9.05pm-10.10pm) among viewers aged 15-49.

The premiere in Singapore made Fox the number one English-language cable channel among viewers 15-49 for its prime-time slot (9pm-10.05pm) as well as the top English-language cable channel in the country for the entire day.

In Korea, the premiere episode viewership was up 375% among all metro audiences 25-39 years old, and improved 77% over the previous season's premiere across pay-TV as a whole. The episode also ranked number one among male pay-TV viewers between 30 and 39 years old.

The premiere in Taiwan was up 18% compared to the premiere of season five part B last year, and was the only foreign language programme to make the top 10 total TV ranker for the timeslot, FIC said.

Fox launched *The Walking Dead* season six simultaneously across 127 markets on 12 October.

China's clash of the online video titans intensifies

Alibaba launches US\$3.5 billion bid to buy Youku Tudou

New York-listed Chinese e-commerce behemoth, Alibaba, has launched an all-out bid to boost its video entertainment capabilities, offering about US\$3.5 billion to acquire online streaming platform Youku Tudou.

The all-cash offer, which looks like it is being supported by Youku Tudou bosses, comes on top of Alibaba's previous acquisition of an 18% stake in the mainland Chinese streaming platform for US\$1.22 billion.

In an announcement on Friday, Youku Tudou said it had received a non-binding proposal from Alibaba Group Holding for a "going private" transaction.

Youku Tudou's board has formed a spe-

cial committee to consider the transaction.

Meanwhile, the company advised shareholders and others that the proposal letter had just been sent and that "no decisions have been made with respect to the company's response to the transaction".

If the acquisition goes through, Youku founder, Victor Koo, will continue to lead the business as chairman and chief executive officer.

"Digital entertainment is core to Alibaba's strategy of promoting consumption of virtual goods and services," Alibaba said in a separate statement.

"The proposed transaction would ex-

pand the existing partnership between Alibaba and Youku, and would combine Alibaba's unparalleled data-driven platforms in e-commerce, media and advertising with Youku's market-leading digital video franchise to significantly accelerate Youku's growth," Alibaba said.

"Youku's large user base, especially in mobile, and its popular platforms with high user engagement would form one of the key pillars of Alibaba's digital entertainment strategy," Alibaba added.

Alibaba has already turbo-charged its content creation initiatives via its Hong Kong-listed Alibaba Pictures Group, formed after the acquisition of ChinaVision in mid-2014.



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The Voice of China busts ratings records

Record finale ends 13-week straight chart topper

The season four finale of Star China Media's *The Voice of China* topped mainland China's TV ratings charts on 7 October, hitting 6.566% (CSM 50 cities, all 4+) and giving the series a record-breaking straight run at the top of China's charts for 13 consecutive weeks on air.



The Voice of China season four winner, folk singer Zhang Lei

The Shanghai-based company said this was the longest winning streak of any format in China's ratings history.

No announcements have been made on season five, but few expect the multi-million dollar show not to go on.

The Voice of China's production budget tops RMB100 million/US\$16 million, making it one of the region's most lavish competition format shows.

CSM viewership data provided by Star China Media put the finale's audience share at 27.39% with an average rating of 7.11% in 34 major cities.

The Voice of China, produced by Star China's Starry Productions, premiered on Zhejiang Satellite TV on 17 July this year.

The series was among China's seven top-ranked shows – all produced by Starry – for the week of 5 October.

The shows included three related to *The Voice of China* and the *Jinxing Show* talk show, which ranked number four.

Charo Santos to head 43rd Int'l Emmy Gala



Enrico Santos, Leng Raymundo, Eva Obadia, Charo Santos-Concio at the 43rd International Emmy dinner at Versailles earlier this month

ABS-CBN president, chief executive officer and chief content officer, Charo Santos-Concio, will serve as Gala Chair for the 43rd International Emmy Awards, which takes place in New York City on 23 November 2015.

Santos-Concio – *ContentAsia's* Asia Media Woman of the Year in 2014 – makes history as the first Philippines' TV network executive invited to serve as Gala chair.

President and chief executive of the International Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, Bruce Paisner, said Santos-Concio "has spearheaded the growth of her organisation to a leading position in the Philippines and the region beyond".

Santos-Concio was appointed ABS-CBN president and chief operating officer in 2008 and chief executive officer in 2013. Apart from being named *ContentAsia's* 2014 Asia Media Woman of the Year, she won Gold Stevie Awards at the 2014 Stevie Awards for Women in Business and Asia Pacific Stevie Awards.

This year's International Emmy Awards will recognise programming in 10 categories. Special awards will be presented to Julian Fellowes, creator and writer of *Downton Abbey* (Founders Award) and Richard Plepler, chairman and chief executive of HBO (Directorate Award).

Japan and South Korea fly the flag for Asia programmes this year. Two Japanese shows were nominated and one from South Korea.

South Korea's *Trial of Chunhyang* – *A Girl Prosecuted by Feudalism*, from public broadcaster KBS, has been nominated in the Arts Programming category. The show, about the forbidden love between a nobleman and a courtesan in the late 18th century, won a Rockie Award at this year's Banff World Media Festival.

Also among this year's 40 nominees in 10 categories and 19 countries are Japanese drama series, *Moju* season one – *Night Cry of the Mozu* (TBS Television/Wowow/Robot), and *Storytelling of Hostages* (Wowow/Twins Japan).

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iflix adds exclusive rights to *Minority Report*, *Fargo 2*

Southeast Asian SVOD platform iflix has added exclusive first-run rights to 20th Century Fox's *Minority Report* to its Malaysia offering. New episodes will be available on the site on the same day as the U.S. broadcast.

In a second first and exclusive acquisition, iflix said it had secured rights to season two of MGM/FX series *Fargo* in Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand. New episodes will be available "shortly" after U.S. broadcast. The first season of *Fargo* is also available on iflix in the three markets.

iflix says it has 400,000 subscribers across Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines. The platform is also expected to announce its Indonesia launch before the end of the year.

CJ E&M's *Three Meals* returns to top ratings Reality show set for 24 Oct regional debut

CJ E&M's original reality series, *Three Meals a Day – Fishing Village*, returned to Korean screens on Friday, 9 October, to top ratings across all platforms.

The premiere episode of the tentpole in-house show took the number one slot among all channels, including pay-TV, free-to-air and IPTV with an average rating of 13.9%; the episode peak was 16.8%.

The series premieres across Asia Pacific on Channel M on Saturday, 24 October, at 9pm (HKT). *Three Meals A Day – Fishing Village* will air in Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Philippines, Cambodia, Myanmar and Australia, with subtitles in English, Chinese, Thai, Bahasa Malaysia and Bahasa Indonesia.



Three meals a day

Set on Majae Island, *Three Meals A Day – Fishing Village 2* follows stars Cha Seung Won and Yoo Hae Jin cooking for themselves and for their guests, such as Korean boyband crooner Park Hyung Sik, who makes a guest appearance in the first episode.

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Who was at.... Disney's closing cocktail @ the ContentAsia Summit



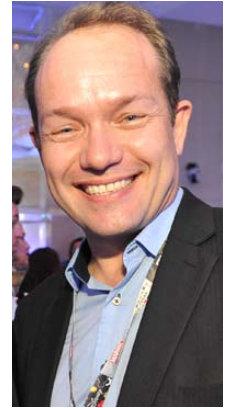
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ContentAsia's regular section, ContentAsia Formats, looks at formats and format development in Asia, including new seasons, series and trends and what these mean to channels, producers and the overall formats industry in the region.

Photo Face-Off season two

A+E Networks Asia's History channel is set to crown Asia's best amateur photographer in the final episode of *Photo Face-Off* season two on Tuesday, 27 October.

Season two of the original photography competition series, *Photo Face-Off* (6x60 mins), premiered on 22 September and runs Tuesdays 10pm-11pm (Sin/HK) with repeats on Wednesdays 7pm-8pm (Sin/HK).

The programme pits 16 amateur photographers from six countries (one from the Philippines, three from Singapore, three from Malaysia, three from Thailand, three from Indonesia and three from Vietnam) against a professional photographer in a series of challenges across the categories of speed, theme and extreme, all designed to push each photographer's skill, knowledge and creativity to the limit.

Last season had five contestants (one each from Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam) and half hour episodes, aired 10.30pm-11pm.

The new season's episodes were extended to one hour (10pm-11pm) with added segments such as the "Light Box" segment for tips/tricks from Asia's photo experts and elimination rounds.

The extensions are all a part of A+E Networks Asia's goal for a "bigger, better and even more competitive" season two. The aim is "to make photo-taking even more fun".

The 16 amateur photographers click their way through several rounds to be



Photo Face-Off season two

the top six "Champion of Champions" in the grand finale, which will be held in the Philippines' island of Cebu.

Season two, hosted by Sarah Lian, features appearances by some of Asia's leading professional photographers as judges. Photographer Justin Mott returns as resident professional photographer.

Produced by Singapore-based Beach House Pictures, the six-part season two took 10 months to create and cost over US\$100,000/episode.

Production execs involved include Beach House Pictures' executive producer Jocelyn Little, executive producer Jim Ribbans, series director Alan Hall, story producer Nick Oh and casting director Marc Checkley; and A+E Networks Asia's executive producer Kevin Ho and production manager Wong Kar Lai.

Production challenges for the second

season included the unpredictable weather during outdoor shoots.

"During our outdoor filming in Hanoi the temperatures soared as high as 36 degrees celsius. We were caught in torrential rain in Hanoi and we filmed through that as well," says Kevin Ho, executive producer, A+E Networks Asia.

Last year's *Photo Face-Off* season one rated more than 200% above channel prime-time average in Malaysia. The series won its timeslot in Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand, according to A+E Networks Asia (source: Nielsen Malaysia/Thailand; Kantar Singapore, Period: 23 Sep-28 Oct 2014, Tuesdays, 10.30pm).

The first season, produced by FremantleMedia Asia, ran Tuesday nights (23 September 2014 to 28 October 2014) at 10.30pm (Sin/HK).

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Southeast Asian consumers top social responsibility charts

80% of SEA consumers prefer socially responsible brands, Nielsen study shows

Southeast Asian consumers are the world's most sustainability conscious, Nielsen reports in a new study.

Nielsen's 2015 Global Corporate Sustainability Report reveals that 80% of consumers in Southeast Asia show preference for socially responsible brands – more than in any other region globally.

The report followed a poll of 30,000 consumers in 60 countries.

The Asia Pacific region had the second highest percentage of sustainability-focused consumers at 76%, followed by Middle East/Africa at 75%, Latin America at 71%, Europe (51%) and North America (44%).

Of Southeast Asian consumers, those in Vietnam and the Philippines were most dedicated to socially conscious brands, with more than 80% of consumers in each country willing to pay more for those products and services.

In those countries, health and wellness benefits were the most influential sustainability-related factors in consumers' purchasing decision, with 79% of Filipino respondents and 77% of Vietnamese respondents citing products' health benefits as a driver of their purchase choices.

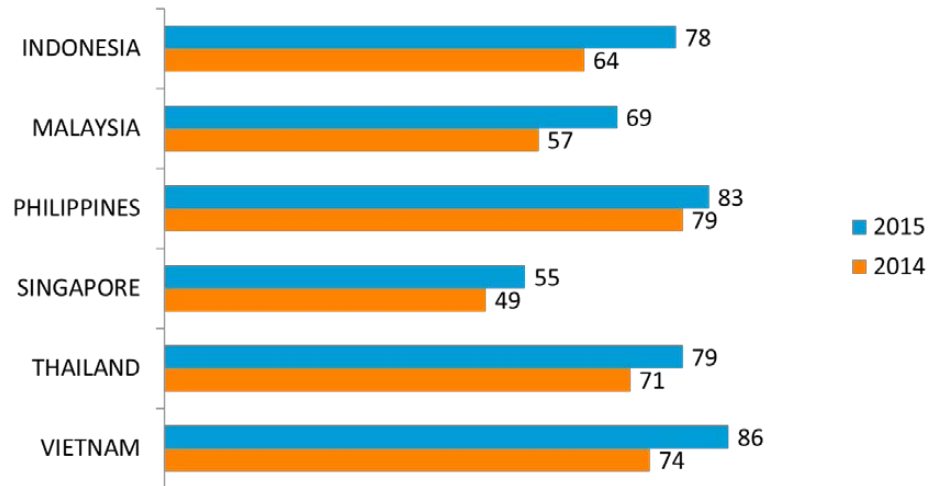
Respondents in Singapore were least likely of all Southeast Asian consumers to pay extra in the name of sustainability, with 55% of consumers saying they would do so.

Across the region, an average of 42% of consumers said TV ads highlighting brands' commitment to being socially or environmentally conscious drove their purchase decisions. This percentage was highest in Thailand at 52% of respondents and lowest in Singapore at 18%.

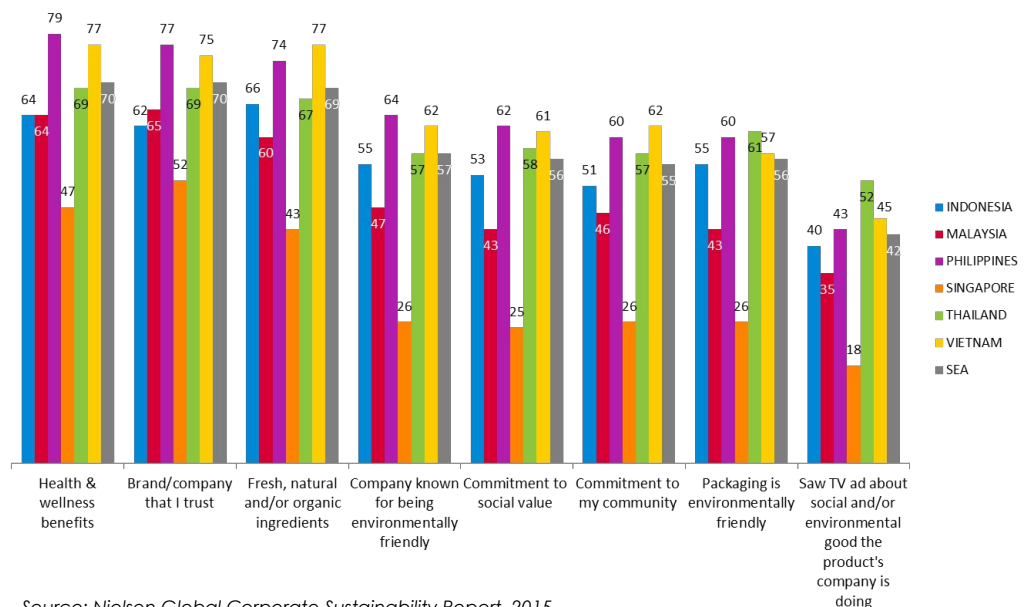
A more influential factor across the board was general brand/company trust, a driver for 70% of consumers in Southeast Asia.

Brand trust tied with health and wellness benefits as the most influential sustainabil-

Willing to pay extra for products and services that come from companies who are committed to positive social and environmental impact



Top sustainability purchasing drivers



Source: Nielsen Global Corporate Sustainability Report, 2015
Note: all figures in %

ity factor across the region on average. Another top purchase driver is the use of fresh, natural or organic ingredients, influencing 69% of consumers regionally.

On a global scale, the Nielsen report

indicated that brands worldwide that have made a commitment to sustainability saw sales growth of more than 4% in the past year, while those without grew less than 1%.



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Sichuan TV Festival

DW-Transtel turns 50

From int'l adventure to 5,000 hrs in 5 languages

German programmer DW Transtel has spent the whole year celebrating its golden anniversary. Now, with the string of 1960s-themed parties coming to an end, the company is moving into its future in Asia with a commitment to "fill the gaps that Asian producers do not produce themselves," says Petra Schneider, Deutsche Welle's (DW) director of sales and distribution.

"The goal is for DW Transtel to provide content that does not compete with local production budgets, but complement what they need," Schneider says.

That's now. Back in 1965, when Transtel was founded, "international television was still an adventure," she says. Early programming included German football – "you can't be a German content provider without football," Schneider says – as well as a game show called *Telematch*, a 1960's tongue-in-cheek competition show that Schneider says put Transtel on the map and, "showed Germans didn't take themselves quite so seriously".

In the 50 years since, DW Transtel has narrowed its focus significantly, with a concentration on science programming and documentaries. The company currently offers 1,100 hours of science programming. The 25 titles include *Great Moments in Science and Technology*, *Science Workshop* and *Quest for Knowledge*. DW Transtel offers about 150 documentaries a year, making it one of Europe's largest docu providers.

A more recent programming addition is European culture and lifestyle series *Euromaxx*, along with spin-offs in design, architecture, food and travel. Local versions have been co-produced in China and with VTV in Vietnam. *Euromaxx* now airs in 52 countries on more than 75 channels.

The biggest changes to DW Transtel's business over the years have been the switch to digital and the ongoing need to adapt German content for international



Celebrating DW Transtel's 50th anniversary during Mipcom earlier this month. From left, standing: Petra Schneider, DW; Ho Poh Lin, Vision Plus Entertainment; Alexandra Lenz, Mee Fung Lee, DW; Marianne Lee, Turner. Front, from left: Vincent Lim, Jarod Lopez, Measat



Petra Schneider

audiences.

With a portfolio of more than 5,000 hours in up to five languages, the switch to digital was massive and, Schneider says, an important one in order to react more quickly to customer's wishes.

Technology has driven the biggest change in the Asia business. "The way Asia's young audiences consume content has definitely affected the way syndication models work for DW Transtel," Schneider says, adding that non-linear rights are now the expectation.

DW Transtel has also been impacted by rising levels of local production. "Most, if not all markets, are rushing forward with local productions and standard packaged syndication productions have become less attractive as trends move towards scripted formats," Schneider says.

Media environments on the ground are also shifting. "More broadcast licenses have been awarded in recent years, affecting the way we develop our commercial terms in competitive territories such as Thailand, Hong Kong and Vietnam," Schneider says.

DW Transtel's biggest challenge going forward is "the ability to invest and produce content that stays relevant in large markets that are typically non-homogenous. That applies to Asia, but especially for the rest of the world".

Moving into the future, she says DW Transtel's mix of content from DW and other German producers and public broadcasters means constantly looking for the right balance between, "producing relevant content at the proper price for our syndication business".

Challenges in Asia vary. In emerging markets, low license fees and a desire for content from recognisable brands is a challenge, says Schneider, while in places such as China, "government policies and politics affect our popularity".

The Asia strategy is to fill gaps in Asia schedules. Schneider says DW Transtel's content "will not compete with local production budgets, but complement what [broadcasters] need but do not produce themselves. This is typically content that we inherently do better because of where and who we are as a brand".

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Australia's Beyond turns 30

New scripted drama unit launches

2015 marks the big 3-0 for Australia's Beyond Entertainment. Birthday drinks at Mipcom earlier this month coincided with the launch of 12 new titles and 160 hours of returning shows.

Celebrations continued with the launch of Beyond International's new scripted drama division announced on 14 Oct. Writer/executive producer David Ogilvy, previously with public broadcaster ABC, heads the new division, which will develop local and international content across a range of genres.

Beyond has had a presence in Asia for more than a decade, and currently airs about 100 shows across the region. These include kids programme, *Backyard Science*. *Kid Detective* and *History Hunters*, both based on the *Backyard Science* format, also perform well in Asia, as does Discovery Channel series *Mythbusters*, says Joanne Azzopardi, Beyond Distribution's vice president of sales for Asia. All are Beyond's own productions.

Azzopardi says the company's production strategy in Asia has focused on science/technology and educational children's content because of the popularity of the genres in the region.

Ron Saunders, general manager of Beyond Screen Production, has fond memories from a number of co-pro-

ductions out of Asia. Production of preschool series *Hoopla Doopla*, for instance, involved a cast of acrobats at a giant CCTV studio outside Beijing. "There was a great launch at the studio that included fireworks and a tour of the huge CCTV backlot," he says.

Beyond Distribution represents various third party titles airing across Asia, including *Love It or List It* (HGTV, We TV) and *Highway Thru Hell* (National Geographic).

Over the past three decades Beyond has expanded its production and distribution efforts with, among others, the Beyond Home Entertainment division about 10 years ago. In 2012, the company made a commitment to the digital future with BeyondD, an all-digital division focused on digital marketing services, media sales and marketing databases.

What's next? Definitely more co-productions. Saunders says discussions are under way with companies in Korea, China, Malaysia and India.



Joanne Azzopardi



Ron Saunders



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