Broadcasters rise to the challenge of machine learning

By **Ann-Marie Corvin**

Hollywood would tell us that the rise of AI will wipe out the human race, but the BBC, Unbabel and Videogorillas are experimenting with machine learning on a far more practical level to better serve audiences.

During the Sunday morning session on AI – 'Driving the Next Wave of Innovation', Dave Bevan, a senior broadcast systems developer from BBC News Labs, said that the broadcaster wanted to use machine learning to help its journalists wrestling with the "tsunami of content" they face when covering major events.

Bevan said: "Think about the General Election in June [in the UK], where a whole range of outside sources come in. How can we use rich metadata and apply machine learning techniques to the thousands of journalists in our London newsrooms trying to find content in our system?"

According to Bevan, initial experiments with ML have focused on speech-to-text, where News Labs has taken 250 hours worth of subtitles from broadcast output and used it as a test model to feed into the machine learning process. Elsewhere, the broadcaster is using ML applications to clear music rights for broadcast, while Bevan revealed that one of the BBC's online channels is using ML to produce programming schedules. "That's just for one evening, but we are starting to be approached by very traditional people in the BBC who are wondering what this technology can do for them," he added.

Fellow panellist Marcelo Lebre, VP of engineering at Portuguese translation software company Unbabel, is also working on practical AI applications, and unveiled an AI-powered, human-refined video translation app, Unbabel for Video, during the session.


Machine learning has many practical applications

Alex Zhukov, CTO at Ukrainian-based Videogorillas, tried to ramp up the Hollywood element with a futuristic-style app which is powered by ML and neural networks to capture and process objects in real time, like Schwarzenegger's robot in *Terminator 2*.

M Mounts up for Leica M 0.8 lenses

CW Sonderoptic

By **David Fox**

The new Leica M Mount for Arri Alexa Mini and Amira cameras allows them to use the Leica M 0.8 lenses (which have only recently started shipping).

"They are really small, lightweight and full-frame lenses, which is really important right now," said CW Sonderoptic's marketing manager, Laura Kaufmann. "If it was a PL or other mount, the lenses would be way bigger."

There is also an adapter for Red cameras (made by Red), but this has been created by CW Sonderoptic, which builds Leica's cine lenses. The mount will ship next month.


CW Sonderoptic's Laura Kaufmann with a Leica M 0.8 lens on an Alexa Mini

There are five M 0.8 lenses: 12, 24, 28 and 35mm (all f1.4) and the exceptionally wide 50-N, which opens up to f0.95, and covers full-frame (24x36mm sensors). The full set costs €39,500.

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Adding fibre to the range

Theatrixx

By **Mark Hallinger**

Theatrixx has extended its line of professional xVision video converters with the release of the TX and the RX, which offer optical fibre connectivity.

The new units feature robust enclosures with protected connectors and built-in power supplies, as do all products across the range. They feature either an SDI and reclocked loop-thru or dual reclocked SDI outputs. They support resolutions up to 1080p60 (3G-SDI) and are fully compatible with existing video SFP-based fibre transmitters and receivers. They are of modular design and can be ordered in single-mode or multi-mode versions, as well as with a choice of fibre connectors, including Neutrik OpticalCON Duo or Quad and ST. More connectors are also available upon request.

The xVision fibre converters (TX and RX) are available now, and the company said more models will follow.

A rack mount prototype showcased on the stand features the same reliable electronics housed in up to eight hot-swappable and reversible modules.

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Prototype on stand: The product will soon be available in a rackmount system

Lietuvos Rytas TV enters Stratus sphere

Grass Valley

By **David Fox**

Lithuanian channel Lietuvos Rytas TV has signed a deal at IBC to upgrade its newsroom with Grass Valley's GV Stratus video production and content management system, with related equipment. The upgrade is driven primarily by a need to better integrate social media with its news output and a move to HD for news (the rest of the channel is already HD).

The upgrade is being carried out with Baltic system integrator Hannu Pro and includes K2 media servers and Edius high-res and proxy editing seats. It will give Lietuvos Rytas TV the "flexibility to grow as our business needs require and to be effective for the ready-to-air news production for live broadcasting and the content delivery for the news portal lrytas.

(Back row) Stefan Weidner, Grass Valley; Kalvis Baumanis, Hannu Pro; Pascal Deremme, GV; (front row) Albertas Morkevicius, Audrius Berdikšlis, and Vidmantas Strimoutis – all of Lietuvos Rytas TV

tv," said Audrius Berdikšlis, LR TV's CTO. Stratus offers smooth integration with its existing distribution systems, broadcast and web, and will allow its journalists to access existing content proxies for fast NLE editing remotely.

The tight integration between GV Stratus and Edius will allow journalists to mix and move low-res and high-res assets, including so-called wild files from citizen journalists across multiple sites, and perform full editing in the field. The upgrade will go live early next year.

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