



CHAPTER TWENTY NEWS

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pittsburgh chapter

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Jim makes a point about the new technology at the November meeting of Chapter 20.

Last Meeting

The November meeting was held on the 20th at Gaetano's.

Larry van Camp wasn't able to come to the meeting because of an illness in his family so Panasonic flew in Jim Thibodeaux, Director of Broadcast Sales Development, to speak to us about Panasonic's new tapeless, hard drive-less recording system called P2. P2 is a PCMCIA solid state memory card.

Jim went over the development of the new recording system. They looked at tape, hard drives, DVD and other optical systems. Panasonic's conclusion was actually to skip consumable, mechanical media completely in favor of solid-state (flash) memory recording. By modifying the basic SD Memory card packaging, Panasonic created a solid-state memory card of PCMCIA size, which has 4 times the transfer speed and 4 times the capacity of a standard SD Memory card. The cards allow full compatibility with DVCPRO and DVCPRO50 with migration to DVCPRO HD as SD memory improves. He went over the many advantages that solid state memory has compared to the other mentioned platforms.

Jim showed the complete line of products that make up the system which includes a laptop editor and even a hand held viewer which also contains a camera.

The business meeting was held after the presentation to allow our speaker to make a hasty retreat to the airport. We decided to purchase our own LCD projector.

Gary Stewart and Paul Mastorakis were selected as the nominating committee for the upcoming chapter officer elections.

Chairman's Corner



The "Selling" of Terrestrial DTV/HDTV

By Sam Zborowski
rwsamz@earthlink.net

One could define various times as the birth of our present DTV system. An industry committee was formed in 1982 to study advanced television systems. An over the air demo of the MUSE Japanese HDTV system was shown to the US Congress in 1987 (and apparently scared them into action!). The "Grand Alliance" defined the basic technical specs and the FCC approved the ATSC standard and established the initial DTV transition schedule in the mid-1990's. So the present DTV system could be old enough to vote, old enough to drive or just in elementary

Continued on page 2

Next Meeting

Time: Thursday, December 18

12 noon to 1:30 P.M.

Program:

Annual Christmas Luncheon & Election of Officers

Place: Gaetano's Restaurant

1617 Banksville Rd.

Use the Rt. 19 South (Banksville Rd)

exit when coming out of town.

Use the Greentree exit when coming in.

No Lunch Fee in December!

Looking Ahead ...

January: Evening meeting at the Pittsburgh Art Institute

Chairman's Corner

Continued from page 1

school! In any case, it is beyond infancy.

Our market-driven economic system is a "Pull" type of system as distinguished from a "Push" type of system exemplified by the old Soviet Union. In the "Push" system, a central authority defines the quantities and types of products to be produced. The problem with this system is that no one seems to be able to predict with great accuracy exactly what consumers need and want and in what quantities. While our market-driven "Pull" system is far from ideal, permitting sometimes terrible economic dislocation for individuals and individual industry segments, it has proven to be successful in the aggregate over time. In our market-driven economy, companies introduce products that they believe will appeal to consumers. The demand by consumers is a fundamental requirement for product (and company) success.

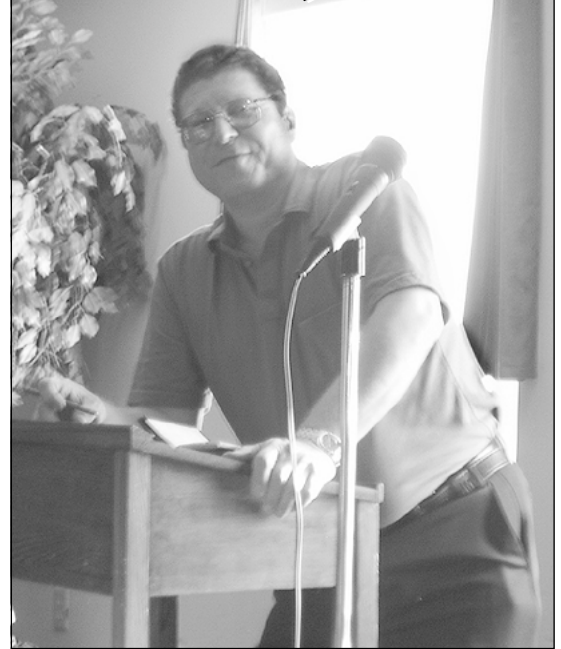
Our terrestrial DTV/HDTV system could be compared to any new consumer product. Normally, one first designs a product to have features, benefits and price points that appeal to consumers. One then goes to market with an advertising campaign to introduce the product to consumers. If successful, consumer demand drives (Pulls) sales and production of the product and the provider makes money in the process.

In the case of DTV/HDTV, we have put the cart before the horse in some sense. The system has been defined and rolled out with little study of the features and benefits to consumers and without any significant advertising applied to educate consumers to the features and benefits that may appeal to them. To the chagrin of many product management and marketing people, consumers as a group are generally fickle and unpredictable. Companies often conduct focus group meetings with representative groups of potential consumers of proposed products or services before spending substantial resources on a particular product development. There have been some studies of consumer impressions of DTV/HDTV. The outcome of these studies is rather surprising.

Apparently, while those involved in the development of our DTV system ranked resolution as the most important feature, lay viewers were initially more impressed with the features of wide-screen aspect ratio and digital surround-sound. Consumers are fickle and unpredictable!

Another complication is that, while consumers as a group are pretty naive, our industry apparently gave them less credit than they deserve. We defined the system to "shield" viewers from having to think about actual RF channels and "preserve" the channel branding and numbering of incumbent TV stations. This makes the consumer education about the existence of and where to find the DTV channels versus the NTSC channels during the transition very difficult!

Thanks, Sam!



Broadcasters have an extremely powerful conduit to consumers in the existing analog TV system. DTV receiver price points have come down to where a significant population of consumers can afford terrestrial receivers. It is time for broadcasters to use their conduit to tell consumers of the existence of and benefits to them of terrestrial DTV service. They also deserve to know that in three years, their present terrestrial analog TV service will disappear!

This article is my last as Chairman of the Pittsburgh Chapter as my term expires this month. I wish the best for the new Chapter Chairman. I expect to contribute newsletter articles occasionally as a member in the future.

Stargate has transitioned my email account as part of their Chapter 11 restructuring; my new email is: rwsamz@earthlink.net.

Please come to the December Chapter meeting. Happy Holidays!



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Society of Broadcast Engineers
Chapter 20
P.O. Box 16312
Pittsburgh, PA 15242-0312

Web page <http://www.broadcast.net/~sbe20>

Chapter 20 Officers

Chairman Sam Zborowski	724-223-9544
Vice Chair Blake Richert	412-824-3930
Secretary Nick Paoli	412-782-3399
Treasurer Paul Mastorakis	724-348-6681
Frequency Coordination Otto Schellin	412-237-1184
Convention Chair Kim Cannon	412-374-1700
Certification Tom Skubel	412-244-4435
FCC Committee vacant	
Newsletter Editor Gary Stewart	412-824-3930