



ABU PRIZES 2009

The ABU invites its members to submit their entries before 21 May 2009

Categories /

TV /

Drama
Entertainment
Children
Youth
News
Documentary
Sports:
'Programme Opening Title Sequence'
Special Jury Prize

Radio /

Drama
Infotainment
Children & Youth
News
Documentary
External Broadcasts:
'Role of Media in Conflict Prevention'
Special Jury Prize

For more details /

Azizul Ariff Ab Aziz
Programme Department
Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union
Tel: (603) 2282 2480/3592
Fax: (603) 2282 4606/5292
Email: abuprizes@abu.org.my

Contest Deadline	21 May 2009
Pre Selection	June - July 2009
Final Judging	1 - 2 October 2009
Awards Presentation	5 October 2009

Ulaanbaatar, MONGOLIA

www.abu.org.my/abuprizes/

Asiavision looks at new technologies

Journalists and engineers from Asiavision members have discussed the possibility of introducing an exchange of news by file transfer alongside the existing satellite-based news exchange.

They asked Asiavision to look into the possibility of a hybrid system, with some smaller members using IP-based file transfer in addition to the two daily satellite feeds.

The move came at the annual meeting of Asiavision news and technical coordinators in Kuala Lumpur on 26-27 March. Seventeen of Asiavision's 19 members took part in the meeting.

At present some of Asiavision's smaller members are unable to contribute to the news exchange because of technical or financial constraints.

Participants felt an affordable server-based exchange for interested members could help these smaller broadcasters start contributing news items for the first time.

Opening the meeting, the ABU Secretary-General, David Astley, urged Asian broadcasters to adopt the new digital newsgathering technologies as soon as they could despite the economic downturn.

"If you don't, you risk being left behind," he said.

If terrestrial news broadcasters could combine the new technologies with good content – accurate, up to date, and as fair and objective as they could make it – they would be well placed to weather the difficult economic times and meet the challenges that lay ahead.

The first day of the meeting was devoted to Asiavision operational issues. On the second day, Saviour Nathan of DigiWorkz in Singapore conducted training on Satellite Communications for Broadcasters.

This covered three main topics: digital satellite newsgathering (DSNG) systems, the Inmarsat platform including the Broadband Global Area Network (BGAN), and IP-based systems.

“ If you don't adopt the new digital newsgathering technologies, you risk being left behind ”



David Astley presents the Asiavision Monthly Award for February 2009 to Prasad Dodangodage of SLRC



Participants from Timor Leste and Bhutan enjoy a social function



Participants visit the Asiavision centre



Trainer Saviour Nathan (right) with delegates

The meeting came shortly after Asiavision marked its 25th anniversary. Launched by the ABU on 16 January 2009, it has seen its membership almost double in the past 25 years.

Participants heard that members were now exchanging close to 10,000 news stories a year, a big increase since 2005. Last year more than 52

percent of these were same-day items – stories contributed on the day they were filmed.

The Secretariat encouraged members to apply for assistance under the funded training opportunities available to Asiavision members. These now include in-house training courses and consultancies. ●

Japan's NHK launches global news channel

Japan's public broadcaster, NHK, has made major changes to its international channel, NHK World TV, to launch a global news channel.

In what NHK describes as a complete rebranding, NHK World TV now broadcasts in English 24 hours a day, with news bulletins every hour.

The channel describes itself as 'Your eye on Asia' and uses a state-of-the-art news studio inside NHK headquarters in Tokyo. In addition to news, it focuses heavily on Japanese and Asian culture.

In programmes marking its launch, the channel looked at the ancient capital of Kyoto and began a series of profiles of Japanese pacesetters such as athletes and musicians, co-produced with Japan's five leading private broadcasters.

Already transmitted on three satellites and via cable TV services

to about 80 million households around the world, NHK World TV's immediate target is to reach 110 million households.

Many of the channel's programmes are also available live online at www.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld.

"NHK World TV enters the new age via the new medium of the Internet, with a lot of the contents also being made available on computer screens around the world at the same time as each programme is broadcast," NHK said.

"When broadcasts in high-definition TV begin at the end of 2009, NHK World TV will become the first HDTV news and current affairs channel in the world."

Other English-language international news channels include CNN, BBC World, Channel NewsAsia, Aljazeera English and France 24. ●

ABU SHORTWAVE GROUP TO PUBLISH NEW JOURNAL

The ABU-HFC Shortwave Coordination Conference has agreed to establish a shortwave journal to be published annually.

The five-day conference held in Kuala Lumpur early this year, agreed that the journal should be published once a year.

Frequency managers at the conference examined more than 6,900 daily transmissions to look at ways of minimising interference.

Two workshops were conducted to help frequency managers to detect shortwave radio interference more



Majid Farahmandnia, Chairman of the ABU-HFC Shortwave Coordination Conference

effectively, with improved software tools and methods.

A new steering committee was appointed for a two-year term during the conference. It includes two new members, SLBC-Sri Lanka and RTND-Mongolia. ●



Gary Stanley of VT Communications (top left) explaining the procedure to minimise frequency collision

HD-Radio can 'multicast'

An HD-Radio Technology Showcase held in Hanoi, Vietnam, in January demonstrated broadcast engineers showing ABU members to better understand ways to transmit digital signals along with analogue signals using the existing channels.

Initiated by the ABU, the four-day showcase was jointly organised by the ABU, VOV-Vietnam, HD-Radio's developer iBiquity Digital and industry partners Nautel, Audemat and Sogitec.

It began with a two-day workshop, followed by a two-day field measurements with over 60 representatives from broadcaster members in Vietnam, Brunei, South Korea, Laos and Mongolia taking part.

Discussions on transition from analogue to digital broadcasting, as well as implementation and regulatory issues too, also attracted representatives of the Vietnamese government.

HD-Radio presents simple implementation methods and options for broadcasters to add digital radio signals to their existing channels without the need to compromise on the analogue quality and availability.

Representatives of IBOC technology demonstrated its feasibility and the test results on In-Band On-Channel (IBOC) – a technology to support new digital receivers while retaining backward compatibility with existing analogue receivers.

VOV-Vietnam said it had tested its newly commissioned transmitters in MW and FM band at its Me Tri transmitter station, and the results had shown that HD-Radio was able to carry multiple digital programme channels (multicasting) on a single frequency.

Participants were invited to gain first hand experience at VOV-Vietnam's transmitter sites with broadcast engineers and equipment suppliers on hand.

The showcase concluded that HD-Radio was suitable for use by radio broadcasters in the Asia-Pacific region while maintaining their analogue services, with a cost increase but a 'seamless' transition.

The showcase gave Asian broadcasters a platform to better understand the HD-Radio technology before they consider implementing it. ●

Asiavision turns 25 with a call to keep growing

Asiavision has marked its 25th anniversary with its membership at its highest level yet – and a call to expand its coverage even further.

The ABU's daily news exchange turned 25 on 16 January 2009. Its 20 members exchange about 10,000 news stories a year, through two daily satellite feeds and news flashes for breaking events.

Asiavision (AVN) enters its second quarter-century with much achieved and many new challenges to meet.

"ABU members are becoming increasingly aware of how AVN is able to enrich their respective news programming efforts," the Chairman of the ABU News Group, Shaun Seow, said in comments marking the anniversary.

"When a story breaks in an AVN member country, the group is often the first to access the fresh pictures.

"But breaking news is not just AVN's forte. There are numerous stories offered by the respective AVN members



Shaun Seow, Chairman of the ABU News Group



Asiavision members meet local artists at last year's news group meeting in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

that go beyond the headlines. These are social or cultural stories produced with an insight or perspective possible only because they come from the domestic broadcaster."

Asiavision has had to overcome many obstacles since its launch, in the process becoming the world's second largest news exchange operation after Eurovision.

It went digital in 2001, a step that led to a big overall improvement in the technical quality of members' contributions.

“ ABU members are becoming increasingly aware of how AVN is able to enrich their respective news programming efforts ”

"Looking back at Asiavision's journey over 25 years, from analogue transmissions with a lot of video noise to the current digital transmissions with little video noise, I am truly amazed by the development of video and content quality," Hideyuki Kosuda, Senior Director, Video Centre, NHK-Japan, said.

"NHK was an original member and will always cooperate with other members for the further advance of the news exchange, to achieve one of its aims – to deepen mutual understanding among diverse cultures."

One challenge for AVN has always been to keep increasing its membership. Until 2004, membership had remained static at around 12 or 13 for several years but the last five years have seen seven new members join.

"In my view, having several new members is the greatest achievement that AVN has made in recent years," Liu Jun, a senior journalist at CCTV-China, said. "I sincerely wish Asiavision will grow bigger and stronger in the future, and make more efforts to convey the voice of Asia and establish the image of Asia."

Most members, who include many of Asia's leading broadcasters, contribute news stories on a daily basis. But some smaller members are not yet able to contribute because of technical or financial constraints.

For Shaun Seow, the challenge for AVN is staying relevant, continuing to enlarge the membership and ensuring that all members contribute.



News group participants in Ulaanbaatar

"It must continue to offer content that is useful and timely – and representative of a huge swathe of Asia. Because AVN can only succeed if its members are active, therein lies a chicken-and-egg issue for the group.

"If more members join AVN, and everyone contributes actively, the group will become dynamic and relevant, and more members will consider joining. A virtuous circle is almost guaranteed."

If most members did not contribute, leaving the heavy lifting to just a few, the latter would ask if their effort was worth their while, he said. Inertia would set in, leading to a downward spiral.

"So I think AVN must stay focused on enlarging its membership and making sure that members contribute actively."

Major developments at Asiavision in recent years include two reductions in members' fees, the launch of a second daily satellite feed in 2005 and a greater emphasis on training for members.

"We now place a high priority on training, to try to ensure that membership of the news exchange has extra benefits," Asiavision's Managing Editor, Alan Williams, said. "We use AVN funds for a wide range of training activities."

Regional training courses have included environmental reporting, how to cover avian flu, newsroom management, broadcast news for young journalists, key issues facing news directors and technical training on satellite transmissions. AVN also offers in-house training for members.

The news exchange is coordinated by ABU staff in Kuala Lumpur. The Asiavision centre was based in Radio Television Malaysia's TV centre for many years but moved to its own premises in the RTM complex in 1998.

In 2005 it moved again to a newer RTM building, joining the rest of the ABU Secretariat.

The major stories AVN has covered in recent years include the Asian tsunami, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the continuing repercussions of the 11 September attacks.

Recent highlights have included DDI's coverage of the Mumbai terror attacks, footage of Iran's first satellite launch from IRIB and MCOT's coverage of a deadly New Year's Eve nightclub fire in Bangkok.

Smaller members too have provided important news stories, such as Nepal Television's coverage of the abolition of the monarchy in the Himalayan nation last year.

"Asiavision is a common home of Asian broadcasting news communities

that has proved its success in internationalising the local news from the respective member countries," Nepal Television's News Director, Rajendra Dev Acharya, said.

"Of course, the contribution of Asiavision in promoting freedom of expression, professionalism and media awareness is equally valuable."

Asiavision will face many new challenges as it strives to remain an essential source of news for Asian broadcasters in a rapidly changing environment. Its silver anniversary is an opportunity to reflect on its achievements so far.

"Radio Television Brunei is very proud of what AVN has accomplished," RTB journalist Jonathan Kho said. "AVN has grown to become a leader in powering the evolving media landscape." ●

"If more members join AVN, and everyone contributes actively, the group will become dynamic and relevant, and more members will consider joining. A virtuous circle is almost guaranteed"



Asiavision Advisory Service training course at Channel News Asia in Singapore

Where journalist meets expert

It's a common challenge for journalists: You need to interview an expert for a story you are working on but can't know where to find one.

Your deadline is approaching – what do you do?

With this in mind, the United Nations has expanded and fully redeveloped its Global Expert Finder (www.globalexperfinder.org), an online resource designed to put journalists in touch with a wide range of experts around the world.

The website, launched last year, now has contact information on more than 90 experts on a wide range of topics including politics, law, terrorism, education, women's rights, human rights, globalisation, religion and art.

Journalists can interview experts in six languages: English, Chinese, French, Spanish, Arabic and Russian.

Global Expert Finder was developed by the United Nations Alliance of Civilisations to assist journalists covering issues that cross cultures, religions and borders.

It enables experienced analysts and commentators to share their views on these potentially sensitive subjects. The experts are chosen on the basis of recommendations from their peers and other experts on the list.

"Every effort has been made to represent a wide range of cultural, political, sociological, linguistic and regional backgrounds," the website says.

“Every effort has been made to represent a wide range of cultural, political, sociological, linguistic and regional backgrounds”

The United Nations' Global Expert Finder website

"Each expert has a strong track record in engaging with media to provide timely, informed and independent views on current issues."

The alliance offers media training to the experts, with tips on how best to cultivate the media, give interviews and put across their message.

The UN says the resource is continuing to expand to cover a wide range of international issues, based on the feedback received from journalists.

At its launch it featured 40 experts and now has more than twice that number.

The redesigned website includes detailed profiles of the experts, snapshots of their opinions and ideas, and links to interviews they have given.

The UN says it welcomes feedback from ABU members on how best to further improve the resource to meet the needs of the media in the Asia-Pacific region.

Global Expert Finder is the core of the Alliance of Civilisations' Rapid Response Media Mechanism (RRMM), launched in January 2008 to encourage balanced and accurate reporting on issues that could cause tensions between communities and religions.

The RRMM was first mobilised around 'Fitna', a short film produced by a right-wing Dutch Member of Parliament, Geert Wilders, which alleged that the Koran was a source of extremism.

The alliance worked to promote a calm response to the film, in contrast to the earlier Danish cartoons crisis, when cartoon portrayals of Prophet Muhammad led to violent protests in a number of countries. ●

“Each expert has a strong track record in engaging with media to provide timely, informed and independent views on current issues”

Join more than 10,000
industry professionals
as we embark on

Digital: The Journey Forward

We hope you can be
A part of this Journey...

Registration
Starts in
April 2009

Under the main theme, "Digital – The Journey Forward", the flagship conference of BCA will see global business leaders in the broadcasting and media industry share ideas and journey forward with the industry. Key topics that will take center stage at the conference this year include **The Future of Broadcasting Business, Hi-Def, IPTV, Digital Convergence, Multimedia on the Move (MoM), Mobile TV, New Media** with a focus on the shift from Web 2.0 to 3.0, **Content & New Media Advertising, File-based Workflow, and Pushing the Digital Media Frontier.**

Log on to http://www.broadcast-asia.com/conference_highlights.htm for more information or contact Joanne Tan at joa@sesallworld.com

Broadcast Asia 2009
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
16 – 19 June 2009 • Singapore Expo | Hall 8

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Asia-Pacific broadcasters help to promote Earth Hour

More than 350 radio and TV broadcasters throughout the Asia-Pacific – including many ABC members – supported this year's Earth Hour, when millions of households and public buildings across the region turned off their lights for one hour on 28 March in a symbolic gesture to support action against climate change.

An estimated 20,000 minutes of airtime was donated by broadcasters in the region to promote the event, an initiative of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

Two television channels – ABS-CBN's ANC cable news channel in the Philippines, and Malaysia's free-to-air channel 8TV – ceased transmissions during Earth Hour, and many radio stations turned off studio lights to broadcast by candlelight.

China and India emerged as the driving forces behind this year's Earth Hour, but it was the Philippines that took the honours for the most active participation in Asia with 15 million Filipinos turning off their lights in 647 cities and towns.



ASTRO staff working by candlelight at their headquarters in Malaysia

The massive Mall of Asia in Pasay City, the world's fourth largest mall, went dark at 8.30 pm local time in a ceremony that was broadcast live to homes around the country by Studio 23, a sister network to ABS-CBN.

As Earth Hour kicked off, with the entire Fijian island of Taunovo fading into darkness, the number of cities,

towns and municipalities registered to take part in the global event rose to 3,943 communities in 88 countries across 25 time zones.

"The explosive growth of Earth Hour, going from two million people from just one city in 2007, to 50 million in 371 cities in 35 countries in 2008,

“ For too long people have been saying that they can't tackle climate change until China and India do so too ”



A sequence of photographs showing the lights on the iconic Petronas twin towers in Kuala Lumpur being turned off for Earth Hour