

News of ABU activities and the broadcasting industry in the Asia-Pacific

Mongolia set to host its first ABU General Assembly

Mongolia, the land of blue skies and green steppes – and home to more ABU members than any other country in the Asia-Pacific region – is gearing up for the hosting of the 46th ABU General Assembly.

The host member – Mongolia National Public Radio and Television (MNB) – has been busy for the past year in planning a memorable General Assembly, the first to be held in Mongolia.

The annual meetings, to be held in the Mongolian capital of Ulaanbaatar, will open on 30 September and continue through to 6 October.

These will include the Technical and Programme Committee meetings, the Sports Group meeting, the Administrative Council meeting and the ABU/FES workshop for developing countries.

Delegates will take a break from the annual meetings on Sunday 4 October to visit a 13th century national park, courtesy of MNB, stopping off on the way at the world's largest statue of Chingghis Khan which was recently completed on the steppes about an hour's drive from Ulaanbaatar.

On 5/6 October, the 46th General Assembly will be held in Mongolia's Parliament building overlooking the city's impressive Sükhbaatar Square, a short distance from the conference hotels.



A typical ger on the Mongolian steppes with a satellite dish to receive TV

The first day of the General Assembly will comprise the annual business sessions and the ABU Prizes night, whilst the second day will comprise the Special Topic, a Professional Discussion, and the election of a new Vice-President.

The Special Topic this year will address the issue of piracy of movies, television programmes and other broadcast content in developing countries, and in the Professional Discussion members will share experiences on cost-saving initiatives adopted during the global economic downturn.

There will also be two professional discussions in the Programme Committee

meeting – one on taking Asian content to international TV markets, and one where radio broadcasters will reveal their strategies for increasing audience share.

The Technical Committee this year will reduce its meetings from four to three days, and will focus more on policies and issues that impact broadcasters and others in the industry. As a new feature, several informal forums, each lasting 45 minutes, will be organised on topics of common interest to members.

The annual meetings will help Asiavision prepare for the file

transfer system that it will introduce to exchange news stories alongside the existing satellite-based exchange.

More than 300 delegates from overseas are expected to be in Ulaanbaatar for the annual meetings, as well as up to 100 from the nine local ABU members.

Early October in Ulaanbaatar is predicted to deliver clear and crisp autumn days with temperatures ranging from below zero at night, to 5-10 degrees Celsius during the day, so don't forget to pack some warm clothes! ●

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Publisher

David Astley
david.astley@abu.org.my

Editor

Sidney Yap
sidney@abu.org.my

Contributors

Alan Williams
John Barton
Letchumi Achanah
Hanizah Hamzah
Tan Hock Guan
Axel Aguirre

Office

Asia-Pacific
Broadcasting Union
2nd Floor, IPPTAR Building,
Angkasapuri,
50614 Kuala Lumpur,
Malaysia.
Tel (603) 2282 3592
Fax (603) 2282 5292
Website www.abu.org.my

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Tan Chek Siong
32-3A-1, 4th floor,
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Entrepreneurs Park,
off Jalan Kuchai Lama,
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Malaysia.

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Dear Sidney:

I write in regards to an article 'Australian fires highlight role of radio in disasters' – *ABU News* (January to March issue).

I am concerned that your article focused only on the role of the smaller sector of the Australian radio industry, in terms of number of listeners – that is the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC). You did not highlight the key role also played by the commercial radio sector in all emergencies. While there is no doubt that ABC radio, (the government funded broadcaster in Australia), played an important role in providing emergency coverage and information during the recent bushfires in Victoria, your article gave the incorrect impression that in times of crisis the primary source of information for the public is the ABC.

Given the fact that nearly 80 percent of Australians, or the vast majority of the listening public, listen to commercial radio, it is important that any public message in times of emergency is generated via commercial radio stations as well as the ABC and other public broadcasters.

Given the excellent job done by local commercial stations during the last bushfire emergency, (at times for a lengthy period when the ABC was off-air); it would be a mistake for any government to direct people primarily to only one sector of the radio industry for information. It is important that the message is clear – all media sources must be used in getting information to local communities during times of emergency.

Thank you for the opportunity to clarify the situation in Australia. It is important for your readers to understand that all radio sectors work together with the government and have done for many years in times of emergency. All media outlets must be used at these times in the interest of public safety.



Joan Warner
Chief Executive Officer
Commercial Radio Australia Ltd.

ABU news

News of ABU activities and the broadcasting industry in the Asia-Pacific

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Country Fire Authority staff monitor a huge fire outside Melbourne in February

Australian fires highlight role of radio in disasters

Coverage had been in line with the ABC's role as Australia's emergency services broadcaster.

"We knew that our communities want to feel a sense of control as they can't really get it," he said in an interview at 774 after the fire.

"Strongly believe, you are interested in the times, what people are under anxiety. They need people they can trust, and we will try to be as close as we can."

"It's not easy what we are in and our relationships with the emergency agencies. It's understanding what the community needs and finding a way to give it to them. We do it all around Australia."

The ABC's Magazine of Emergency Broadcasting, Jan-Mar, see 774's

We got warnings to know they came from the weather bureau. We estimate the number of warnings as the situation develops. When there is a direct threat to life, we go to rolling coverage so we live in the studio to take immediate action from an emergency agency or from the public to tell us how to help.

The ABC's emergency services reported that both new and national media have themselves taking on special roles and responsibilities as these affected by the fire. It's intended to make sense of the tragedy.

"Local radio stations in particular have been very active in the use of the radio during the day, when using in the

"We need the warning, we get out, and to improve later our lives and so."

disasters becoming a kind of a small open source where people could share their stories and then a huge and an overview of their communities and may be listening to where they could go to help."

Mr. Warner said countries such as Australia, Indonesia and others, because they reported to the ABC were the areas where broadcast radio had to be used to get information.

With the media crisis of all of the emergency agencies, we tried to keep up with the demand for information. We showed that we did prepare them and to working together."

He said that in the wake of the fire, Australia needed to look again at the introduction of a more powerful warning system, where people could really understand them to survive on the radio. The system, however, that in 2004, our was not prepared because of the most involved.

The ABC's own press release named for its role coverage of the bushfires. One said, "The ABC did a wonderful job during the fire. It didn't just provide information, it was a source of the whole story."

A Magazine of Emergency Broadcasting, Jan-Mar, see 774's

ABU's Magazine of Emergency Broadcasting, Jan-Mar, see 774's

"We need the warning, we get out, and to improve later our lives and so."

INSIDE: ▶ Earth Hour ▶ Green Radio ▶ Digital Broadcasting Symposium ▶ Asavision turns 25

Applications are invited from suitably qualified persons
to be considered for appointment as

ABU Secretary-General

The Secretary-General is the administrative head of the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU), reporting to the ABU President, and responsible for managing the ABU Secretariat located in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and implementing the decisions of the ABU Administrative Council and General Assembly.

The key responsibilities of the Secretary-General are to:

- Implement the initiatives contained in the ABU's Strategic Plan to achieve the Union's vision, mission and objectives
- Promote and project a positive image of the ABU in the global media environment, and be a channel of communication and liaison with other international organisations
- Provide leadership to and oversee the operations of the ABU's departments to ensure that they provide quality and timely services to members
- Manage the finances of the Secretariat, control the assets and funds of the ABU, and oversee the preparation of budgets and financial reports

Candidates will be assessed against the following selection criteria:

1. Proven track record of leadership and management in a broadcasting or similar organisation
2. Experience in planning and implementing strategic initiatives in an international broadcasting context
3. High level financial management experience including the preparation of budgets and financial reports
4. Good working knowledge of broadcasting issues in the Asia-Pacific region and have familiarity and understanding of the work of the ABU
5. Ability to promote and project a positive image of the ABU and be a channel of communication and liaison with other international organisations
6. Demonstrated strong inter-cultural and inter-personal skills with the ability to generate consensus and influence outcomes among people of diverse backgrounds and nationalities
7. Very high level writing and communication skills in English are a pre-requisite, but a working knowledge of other languages in the region would be an advantage. A degree in a relevant discipline is desirable

Applicants must be a citizen of a country in the ABU region. The successful candidate will be appointed for a three-year term, with a possible three-year extension.

Applications should include a curriculum vitae and a statement indicating how the candidate meets the above selection criteria. Applications should be sent to:

**Ms. Mariko Saeki, International Planning and Broadcasting Department,
NHK Broadcasting Center, 150-8001, Tokyo, Japan
Phone: +81-3-5455-2273, Fax: +81-3-3481-1576, Email: saeki.m-ka@nhk.or.jp**

The closing date for applications is **16 October 2009**.

Asiavision monthly award winners

The Asiavision Award for the best story of the month has seen a varied list of winners over the past seven months for their quick and comprehensive coverage of events.

CCTV-China won the award in June for its comprehensive coverage of a deadly fire on a bus in the city of Chengdu, capital of southwest China's Sichuan province. It provided visuals of the 5 June incident on the same day and followed it up with updates. The bus blaze killed 27 people and injured 74 others.

The May award went to IRIB-Iran for its efforts in making available the visuals of a bomb blast at a mosque in the southeastern Iranian city of Zahedan. The terror attack on the Amir al-Momenin mosque during the evening prayers of 28 May killed 25 people and injured 125 others. The IRIB updates included visuals of hundreds of thousands of people attending the funeral procession of the victims of the attack.

Reporting on the political turmoil in Thailand earned MCOT the April award. Anti-government protestors held rallies in Bangkok before moving to the resort town of Pattaya which was to host the ASEAN regional grouping and ASEAN + 3 (China, Japan, South Korea) summits. Several foreign leaders had to be evacuated by helicopters and the summits cancelled when protestors managed to storm the summit venue on 11 April.

The anti-government rallies then moved back to Bangkok and Thai authorities enforced a crackdown on protestors on the morning of 13 April before normalcy returned in the Thai capital after security forces took control on 14 April.

Making available early visuals of a dramatic crash-landing of a FedEx cargo plane at Narita Airport in Japan earned NHK the Asiavision Award for March. The American pilot and co-pilot on board the plane died in the morning incident of 23 March.

The FedEx cargo plane which was flying in from Guangzhou, China, crashed into the runway and caught fire after failing to keep a proper landing position in strong winds.

SLRC won the award for February for its early coverage of a kamikaze-style air attack by the Tamil Tiger rebels on the Sri Lankan capital Colombo. It provided visuals of the aftermath of the 20 February night time raid by two light aircraft. Sri Lankan security forces shot down one aircraft while the other crashed into the Inland Revenue Building in Colombo.

MCOT of Thailand and RTB-Brunei were the joint winners in January.

MCOT won on its coverage of a deadly fire at a nightclub in Bangkok where revellers were partying in welcoming the new year. Fireworks used to highlight the new year countdown were believed to have set off combustibles on the premises of the nightclub. Several hundred revellers were packed into the club when the

fire broke out after midnight, claiming some 61 lives and injuring more than 200 people.

Brunei was hit by floods and landslides in the later half of January and RTB won the Asiavision award for the month with its coverage of the wet season. A much heavier rainfall than usual triggered landslides and flash floods around the country. RTB also provided follow-up visuals of the inundation in various parts of the country.

The December 2008 award went to RTM-Malaysia for its prompt coverage of a deadly landslide incident on hilly terrain near the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur, including regular updates on the search and rescue efforts. The early morning landslide in Hulu Klang on 6 December buried 14 bungalows in two housing estates under rubble. The tragedy claimed four lives and forced the temporary evacuation of several thousand residents living in the vicinity. ●

Oyuntuya learns – and teaches

It was a two-way learning experience when Oyuntuya Dugersuren of TV5-Mongolia spent a month on attachment to the Asiavision centre in Kuala Lumpur in May.

Oyuntuya, who has worked for TV5 since its launch in 2003, learned how journalists at the centre carry out the daily coordination of the news exchange, including the compilation of offers from members and the allocation of satellite time.

But as a graduate in computer and science technology, she was also able to pass on valuable tips in areas such as online storage of video clips and the transfer of material from television monitor to computer.



Oyuntuya Dugersuren

Oyuntuya won the 'Best Engineer' award in the Golden Falcon TV Awards 2008, organised by the Union of Mongolian Television Channels. She also attended a 45-day Deutsche Welle Akademie course in Internet broadcasting for television in 2005.

As TV5's main Asiavision coordinator, she combines her engineering skills with a journalist's role. She was the first person from the station to spend time on attachment to the centre.

"It was a great experience," she said shortly before returning to Ulaanbaatar. "I learned how members send their offers and the need for same-day offers. The Asiavision centre works hard to obtain same-day stories."

TV5 has been a member of the news exchange since January 2007. Oyuntuya's attachment was part of a scheme funded by Asiavision under which journalists from member stations spend time at the centre learning more about how the news exchange works and helping in the daily coordination.

New media 'changing war propaganda'

The new media is changing the face of war propaganda, often to the advantage of insurgency groups, an international conference in Bonn, Germany, has heard.

Speakers told the Global Media Forum on 3-5 June that all sides in conflicts were now using dramatic images on the Internet as a form of public relations.

"It's a war of images...a war of conflicting virtual realities," Sebastian Kaempf of the University of Queensland said.

He was speaking at a session that looked at how the Internet was being used for such activities as conflict information and misinformation, cyber-terrorism, hacking and military blogs.

Another speaker, Thomas Rid, a US expert on the media and conflict

reporting, said the fundamentals of propaganda remained the same. What had changed was the speed of the new media environment, enabling insurgency groups to act quickly.

This in turn forced ministries of defence to move quickly to put out a response.

Insurgents could act rapidly because of the nature of their organisations, Marc Hecker of Institut Français des Relations Internationales said.

Armies on the other hand were large organisations and slow to handle media communications.

Mr Rid said the use of the Internet had not only dramatically changed military strategies and secret service activities but also reporting about armed conflicts.



A war of images...the new media under the spotlight in Bonn

In the 1990s, journalists had practically had a monopoly over war reporting. Now thousands of soldiers had blogs, as did civilians in regions of conflict.

"The images from the first US-led war in Iraq were controlled by the large international news agencies. But now, those taking part in war, like soldiers, regular troops or insurgent or militant groups, are making videos and placing them online," he said.

"In doing so, they are making hangings, explosive attacks and ambushes available to everyone around the world."

Another session looked at how the US military was using virtual war games to boost recruitment at a time when it was struggling to attract enough new soldiers.

Peter Mantello, Professor of New Media at the Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University in Japan, said the military's official online war game, America's Army (www.americasarmy.com), was now the most successful recruiting tool it had produced.

The game was also used in simulators that the army set up at large events such as fairs to give people a "virtual army experience", he said. Genuine army footage was also used, mixing the imaginary with the real.

Professor Mantello noted that some people in the Middle East, unhappy with video war games in which the heroes were American, were producing their own war games to reclaim their "digital dignity".

The Global Media Forum, staged by Germany's international broadcaster, Deutsche Welle, brought together about 900 people from around the world.



Peter Mantello

Held in Germany's old parliament building, it focused on 'Conflict prevention in the multimedia age'.

The forum included a workshop on 'Covering conflict – an Asian perspective' organised by the ABU, the Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD) and the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC). ■



The Global Media Forum opening session in Germany's old parliament building in Bonn



Global Media Forum participants

Asian broadcasters capture the solar eclipse

Asian broadcasters pulled out the stops on 22 July to cover the total eclipse of the sun from land, air and sea.

Many broadcasters went live as the eclipse moved across the heart of Asia, sweeping through India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar, China and Japan.

Among those showing the event live was Bhutan's national broadcaster, BBS, which shared its coverage with other members of Asiavision, the ABU's daily news exchange.

China's national broadcaster, CCTV, and Japan's public broadcaster, NHK, also provided Asiavision with news flashes on the eclipse.

Other Asiavision members who provided footage of the total or partial eclipse were BTV-Bangladesh, TVB- Hong Kong, DDI-India, IRIB-Iran and MCOT-Thailand.

Not since the tsunami of December 2004 had so many members offered simultaneous coverage of a single story.

In India, a six-member crew from DDI joined scientists on board a

transport plane that took off from Agra to view the eclipse from high altitude.

An NHK crew was on board a passenger vessel in the Pacific, about 1,200 km south of Tokyo, to record striking images of the eclipse.

CCTV provided live footage as the eclipse followed the path of the Yangtze River across the country.

International broadcasters such as BBC World, CNN International and Al Jazeera also devoted widespread coverage to the event.

At 6 minutes and 39 seconds, it was the longest total solar eclipse of the 21st century. A longer one is not due until 2132 – and one can only imagine what technologies broadcasters will have at their disposal to cover it. ●

“ Not since the tsunami of December 2004 had so many members offered simultaneous coverage of a single story ”

News Group endorses journalist safety code

THE ASIA NEWS GROUP HAS ENDORSED A JOURNALIST SAFETY CODE that aims to help those who work in hostile environments.

The code, drawn up by the International News Safety Institute (INSI), calls for appropriate safety training and the provision of safety equipment for staff sent to hazardous locations.

It urges news organisations to consider safety first, before competitive advantage, for journalists in hostile environments.

The code says assignments to war and other danger zones must be voluntary and only involve experienced news gatherers and those under their direct supervision.

At its annual meeting in Kuala Lumpur, the News Group also endorsed the Jakarta Declaration on the Safety of Journalists in the Asia-Pacific, drawn up at a news safety conference in the Indonesian capital in December 2008.

Among other things, the declaration says freedom of expression and a free press are critical to the sustained development of

nations, to the end of corruption and to the alleviation of poverty.

It deplores the killings of, attacks on, and unwarranted detentions of journalists and other news professionals in the region.

INSI's Director, Rodney Pinder, told the News Group meeting that some news organisations were cutting back on their foreign bureaus and instead relying on stringers and contract workers for foreign news coverage.

“They are often little more than cannon fodder. It's an outrageous situation and has to be addressed by the industry.”

Mr Pinder was one of two guest speakers on the second day of the meeting. The other was Aale Raza, Vice President of Benchmark Broadcast Systems, Singapore.

Mr Raza spoke on digital newsrooms and the effect the work flow has both on the work of newsroom staff and on the bottom line.

- For the INSI safety code please see http://www.newssafety.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=165&Itemid=100066

Asiavision to launch file transfer system

Asiavision is to launch a file transfer system for exchanging news in parallel to the existing satellite-based exchange.

The ABU News Group, which sets policy for the news exchange, took the decision at its annual meeting in Kuala Lumpur on 2-3 July.

The move is aimed at helping smaller broadcasters who are unable to contribute news stories by satellite to start offering items for the first time.

Some Asiavision members either lack the technical facilities to transmit to AsiaSat 2, the satellite the news exchange uses, or cannot afford the uplink charges. A low-cost file transfer system using the Internet is designed to remedy that.

File transfer tests among selected members have been taking place for some time. The News Group decided to launch the system as soon as possible

for any members who wish to use it, with Asiavision paying the initial set-up costs and monthly network charges.

In another decision, the group unanimously elected Prattana Nuntaratpun of MCOT-Thailand as its new Chairperson, for a three-year term. She succeeds Shaun Seow of Singapore's Channel NewsAsia.

Harjit Singh of RTM-Malaysia became Vice-Chairman, joining Ms Nuntaratpun and the other Vice-Chairman, Yoshio Nishikawa of NHK-Japan, on the leadership team.

The group also decided to increase funding for training in the coming year. Planned training events include a regional workshop on digital newsrooms covering content, management and technical issues.

The three Asiavision Annual Awards for 2009 were announced at the

meeting. DDI-India won the award for the most news flashes during the past year, while RTB-Brunei and MCOT won for the overall quality of their contributions. Each award carries a cash prize of US\$700.

Opening the meeting, the ABU's Acting Secretary-General, David Astley, urged Asian broadcasters to make more use of new technology and new media platforms to both collect and deliver news content.

He said this included making more use of user-generated content.

"There have been many instances where user-generated content has provided broadcasters with breaking news video coverage that has not been available from their own reporters or agencies," he said.

Mr Astley said new media platforms would not take over from traditional broadcasting or news gathering

practices for a long time, but would gradually eat into audience shares.

"The only way you can combat that is to be on these new media platforms as well. And that means you should be users as well as followers in order to fully understand the potential of the new media."

Deborah Steele of ABC-Australia – Asiavision's newest member – said the Australian national broadcaster's audiences were increasing, against all the trends, largely as a result of developing new media support for traditional broadcasting.

"Podcasts are now a tremendous part of TV audiences," she said.

Channel NewsAsia's Chay Ting Ngee said the Singapore broadcaster had seen a big growth in visitors to its website. It was also experimenting with citizen journalism, although ethical issues remained. ●



Ibrahim Yahaya

RTM-Malaysia appoints new chief

Malaysia's public service broadcaster, Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM), has appointed Ibrahim Yahaya as its new chief.

He is Datuk Ibrahim Yahaya, who was formerly the Media Advisor to Malaysia's Minister of Information.

He takes over from Dato' Abdul Rahman Hamid – one of the ABU's Vice-Presidents – who has moved to a new role as Special Advisor to the Minister of Information.

Datuk Ibrahim has a background in both the print and electronic media. He was Chief News Editor of the Malaysian news agency, Berita Harian, and for three years was editor and manager of current affairs and talk shows with the commercial broadcaster, TV3.

With his nickname "Tiger", he is well known in local media circles, and said he aspired to turn RTM into a "dynamic and respected" station.

Tehran forum probes in the multi

In the very grand surroundings of IRIB's conference centre (at the heart of an imposing, tree-lined campus where all of the IRIB radio and television activities are centred), over 600 local and international broadcasters were introduced to the dominant themes of the conference.

With heavy media coverage, and elaborate multi-media presentation, the format of the opening provided a framework for the discussion which threaded through the following sessions exploring both the challenges and excitement of radio's future.

Some of the future is here, according to self-styled futurist Gerd Leonhard from

Speakers at sessions which followed explored in more detail than Gerd's panoramic view how radio has so far adapted to the new digital landscape, and how it might continue to do so productively in the future, exploring the history of digital radio and the multimedia platforms of KBS-Korea and RTHK-Hong Kong.

Podcasting was enthusiastically advocated, and Iranian broadcasting was also analysed by local and international scholars who focused on the role of the media in recent presidential elections, and set out a theoretical framework for understanding the next stage of development on the Internet.

The idea of 'green radio' was explored in a special session which looked at different perspectives on the environment and responses to it. This was an expansive hour which also flagged future developments in the 'Lights Out' campaign being organised by the ABU, and consideration of how public-information campaigns can be effectively mounted. Counter to much of the online-focused discussion, the value of live radio which is established in the days immediately following a natural disaster was also laid out for consideration.

The second day was a full one, beginning with a session looking at development issues, and it was intriguing to see how variously this was defined for the different countries which were represented. A number of speakers suggested that traditional and local radio fulfils critical needs for many millions of listeners across the globe.

As Mike Adams of the Far East

Broadcasting Co. had done the previous day in talking about the importance of live radio in a time of natural disaster, Basharat Ahmed Khan from India stoutly defended the public service function of live radio. He argued that public service broadcasters should actively support campaigns promoting basic health and education in areas of poverty or great social need.

The recent history of community radio in the UK was traced by Salvatore Scifo of the European Union Institute, and Hosseinali Afkhami of Iran explained how radio assisted rural development in eastern Azerbaijan, where, as recently as during the 1970s there was no telephone or electricity. The Armenian experience was also analysed by Dr Mushegh Hovsepian.

In a session on innovations in digital radio, Steve Ahern from Australia discussed the implications of fragmentation of audiences, and the resulting change in the patterns of consumption, on the nature



Paul Bushnell of Radio New Zealand, responds to questions after his presentation to the session on new delivery platforms for radio services

This year's International Radio Forum, organised jointly by the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) and the ABU, was held in Tehran in May in conjunction with IRIB's annual radio festival.

The theme of this year's conference was 'Meeting the Challenges of the Multimedia Era – Using New Platforms to Serve Markets'.

Paul Bushnell, Group Manager, Spoken Features, Radio New Zealand, was one of the international guests at the forum and provides an overview of the presentations for ABU News.

Switzerland. In his keynote speech, he laid out a challenge for broadcasters to not rely on its traditions, but instead to embrace the new forms of distribution the Internet can offer, and benefit from the result – a fluid, intimate connection with the listener in which many of the things we once thought important are now redundant, such as defined programme schedules and the technological apparatus of analogue broadcasting.

In its place a new world of consumer choice and content delivery means that broadcasters must get to know and use the Internet, including social networking sites, to expose our content to a rising generation for which traditional radio forms are increasingly, or actually, irrelevant.



Masud Ahmadi, Secretary of the Festival, said the event provided an opportunity to take a more scientific and educational approach in radio

the future of radio media era

by Paul Bushnell

Photo by Ali Feizabadi



In a closing address to the Festival, IRIB chief Ezzat Allah Zargami said media needed to be saved from the capitalism that had been driving it

of programming which media organisations create.

He suggested that we should call ourselves 'audio content creators' rather than broadcasters.

Barry Clarke from ABC-Australia flagged the introduction of digital radio in Australia in July 2009, and considered the changes it will entail. The value of traditional local radio was emphasised, given the particular example of how they assisted in providing emergency information to listeners during this year's disastrous bush fires.

Several speakers were from Tehran University: Dr Azam Ravadard and Mohammed Hoseini and Dr Sayed Vahid Aghili contrasted the characteristics of analogue and digital radio, along with its cultural and social context.

The role of drama and music in radio was traced by a variety of speakers, including two German academics whose papers were connected by a remarkable 1930s experimental radio play which was a precursor to Orson

Welles's famous War of the Worlds broadcast a decade later.

The afternoon concluded with a further session by Gerd Leonhard, exploring in more detail the themes set out in his keynote speech.

Among the points he set out were the following broadband broadcasting principles:

- 1) Broadcasters should be and remain the best possible curators, on all platforms
- 2) Broadcasters should support time-shifting
- 3) Broadcasters should support convergence (devices, platforms, UIs)
- 4) Broadcasters should support sharing
- 5) Broadcasters should support interactivity and engagement
- 6) Broadcasters should embrace community and conversation

And the wrap-up discussion began with a funny and charming presentation by Palle Bo, from the Radioguru company in Denmark, about producing powerful radio commercials. These were mostly gems of programme-making, condensed into between 30 and 90 seconds.

The radio festival event that was staged alongside the conference had a number of international broadcasters in attendance from all round the world. Programme-makers from places as diverse as Slovenia, China, Korea, India and Argentina, mixed with academics and other broadcasters from other parts of the globe.

It was really a wonderful part of the event to make contact with many local broadcasting staff – all bursting with energy, and keen to discuss many of the issues raised during the forum's sessions. All of us international guests seemed to be giving an endless series of interviews, too, on the nature of radio, its philosophical underpinnings and practical future.

In addition to the extensive formal programme of the conference, the organisers showed delegates around the campus of IRIB, many Tehran museums, and we spent an unforgettable day visiting the city of Shiraz and the nearby historic site of ancient Persepolis.

The pride and enthusiasm of our hosts was evident in all of these activities, and they provided insights into both the financial commitment to broadcasting, and the rich history of the country.



Delegates to the International Radio Forum listen to Gerd Leonard's keynote address on 'broadcasting meets broadband' on the opening day