

AUDIO ENGINEERING SOCIETY

TC-Audio for Cinema Committee Meeting

June 02, 2022

4 pm – 5 pm (GMT)

via Zoom

Attendees

1. Eelco Grimm
2. Brian Long (Skywalker)
3. Charles Robinson (Dolby)
4. Lon Neumann
5. Brian Vessa (Sony Pictures)
6. Douglas Greenfield
7. Gunter Oehme
8. Neil Shaw
9. Phill Williams (Netflix)
10. Scott Norcross (Dolby)
11. Julian Pinn (Julian Pinn Ltd) – Chair

Agenda

1. Roll call
2. Meeting frequency, momentum and support
3. Committee focus and Loudness topic (last meeting summary and next step)

Minutes

- 1. Roll call**
 - Taken and reflected in Attendees above.
- 2. Meeting frequency, momentum and support**
 - Julian: quarterly meetings idea is designed to give an automatic momentum and a predictable rhythm.
 - Eelco: cannot do Wednesdays.
 - Julian: we should try to accommodate.
 - Niel: cannot do Wednesdays either.
 - All: we agreed on Thursdays.
 - Phill: first week of first month of each quarter could often clash with US public holidays. What about second month in each quarter?
 - All: agreed on second week of the first month of each quarter.
 - Julian: we can also hold, like this one, ad hoc meetings between the quarterlies.
 - Julian: I need support and always welcome minute takers etc.

- Lon: I volunteer Mel; he's good.
- Julian: I frustrated Mel unfortunately and he's not at this meeting – not sure if those are linked. I hope he can join our next meeting. We switched from MS Teams to Zoom so that he can.

3. Committee focus and Loudness topic (last meeting summary and next step)

- Julian: key topics are loudness and education
- Brian agrees that the main roll of this committee is education. It set up the educational panels at the conventions and workshops. This is a leading purpose for what this particular group is about. I also think that this loudness topic is part of that education. Make people understand what the issues are etc. The loudness issues is a deeper issue than just it being too loud. Broadcast: you're interesting in matching loudness between content items. In Cinema, it's not like that. Loudness is highly misunderstood by the public. So part of the education, we want to bring loudness into it. Eelco did a great panel some time ago. That was a great educational panel. It would be good to do that again for example.
- Julian summarised the last meeting on loudness and how we decided to focus on baby steps, manageable steps and that Charles did a great summary and start creating a 'problem definition' document.
- Charles happy to publish the document to TC-AC so that we can start a task group to publish it.
- Lon: agree with Brian; want to add that associations like Jim Starzynski (NBC Universal, director of audio) ATSC -> Consumer Technology Association
- Scott: Just want to thank Lon for this up, but to correct some aspects. The streaming loudness work, led by Jim Starzynski (NBC Universal), was conducted in the AES TC on Broadcast and Online Delivery, produced AES TD1006 Loudness Guidelines for OTT and OVD Content which led to AES71-2018: Recommended Practice Loudness Guidelines for Over-the-Top Television and Online Video Distribution. These provide recommendations for content and content distribution. On the consumer device side, CTA has produced CTA-2075 Loudness Standard for Over-the-Top Television (OTT) and Online Video Distribution (OVD) for Mobile and Fixed Devices. These address the broadcast/streaming side, consumer playback devices, and are not cinema and out of scope of this group.
- Brian Long: CEDIA (ultra hifi home theatre people)
- Niel Shaw: and infocom people.
- Eelco: I think it's important for us to define how broad the committee will cover. This committee was mainly focusing on in-cinemas. The impact of the regulations was on the studios who rather not do multiple mixes, which impacts the cinema releases. Maybe that was not the original intent of their demands. Perhaps we should discuss that.
- Julian: Brian?
- Brian: is this committee focussed on cinema? I guess it is. Although I think there is a lot of influence from different presentation platforms. Everyone seems to have their own philosophy about making loudness specs work for multiple deliveries. I think, to Eelco's point, some people are trying to do the 'one-size-fits-all' approach so that it plays well on all platforms, but I personally am not doing that at Sony because the initial mix for the cinema should be at the dynamic range for cinema and what the mixers and directors want for cinema and doing what they feel is right. From there, we work to the specs for streaming. It's not how other people are doing it, but I'm still holding out that cinema, which can tolerate dynamic range, not overall loudness, but the dynamics from quiet to loud—very cinematic. Completely doesn't work at home. They can mostly be excessive for the home. So usually you have to bring those dynamics in. Instead of squashing, you leave the top where it is and bring the lows up to cope with the lower replay level at home. Others have different philosophies.

I'm perfectly willing to discuss this at least on an educational basis because the mixers may not wish to change what they do.

- Charles: I agree with Brian's comments and keeping the group focussed on the cinema side [rather than streaming or over-the-top]. Clearly connections that need to be made between the different delivery markets. But I don't want to have a one-size-fits-all. We should focus on Cinema – it's falling behind. Perhaps further narrow our scope and make these baby steps. Maybe that's just education, what we see the issues are. Laser focus on something. For example, our survey shows that it's trailers that are too loud still.
- Eelco: I wonder if it's still the case about loud features [feature films] since the introduction of Netflix guidelines; my impression is that the really loud features are improved [fewer].
- Julian: SAWA results match the survey from Charles and that trailers are probably 4 – 5 dB too loud: the marketing competitive side of the studios often have different objective than the feature film side.
- Charles: yes, that has to be the key message.
- Julian: Should our baby step be to create this first document – to publish.
- Charles: we should not be preaching. We must elicit input from the industry; get them engaged; even as early as the problem statement. Bring NATO in for example. They have expressed interest. NATO and studios are not necessarily harmonious. Studio representation is really important. Getting them involved as soon as possible is better.
- Julian: I agree.
- Eelco: my thought is that if we agree that the trailer issue is the most important one to solve, it would not make too much sense on looking for a solution if we cannot have much impact on these rules. We should be in contact with the stakeholders.
- Julian: screen advertising is well controll because most territories have only one or two companies that control the distribution of pre-show ads. Trailer production and distribution is much more fragmented globally, though, and more challenging to control.
- Charles: TASA is working, at least in the US. Studios are following it.
- Charles will happily work with whomever in this group in making a presentable form of this kick-off problem document – not for publishing – but to take to TASA or any studios to start the dialogue that is presentable to stakeholders.

END

Meeting minutes by Julian Pinn