



FILM, TV & GAMES CONFERENCE 2015

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at The Royal Institution

Session 1: Chair's Welcome and Introduction

This report summarises a session that took place at the BSAC Film, TV & Games Conference 2015.

Marc Samuelson chaired the Conference and delivered the opening speech.

Summaries of other sessions from the day and a complete report of the Conference are available from www.bsac.uk.com

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ABOUT BSAC

The British Screen Advisory Council (BSAC) is an independent, industry funded membership body for the audiovisual sector.

We uniquely bring together the widest possible range of interests, knowledge and contacts to exchange ideas and information about business and policy issues. Our Members are invited to join on the basis of their personal qualities, experience and expertise, and are drawn from the major TV broadcasters, independent film and TV producers, distributors, exhibitors, US studios with major operations in the UK, trade associations, trades unions, training providers and new media companies, such as Google and Spotify.

Many of our activities take place privately, which enables business leaders to freely discuss the fast changing nature of the industry.

On policy, we provide opportunities for industry and policy makers to hear a breadth of viewpoints and, wherever possible, for the sector to speak with a single and authoritative voice. Over the years we have worked closely with the Treasury, HMRC, DCMS, BIS, IPO, the European Commission, WTO, and WIPO.

We also enjoy the support of Associate Members, which are businesses with a particular interest in the sector. These include legal firms, accountancy practices and investment management firms, and are an important port of call for obtaining views and expertise.

We commission and generate research and reports to underpin our work.

We host a series of events that are open to a broader invited audience. These include an annual Film, TV and Games Conference, an Interview Series and occasional seminars. These provide high quality debates and networking opportunities.

More information can be found at www.bsac.uk.com

CHAIR'S WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

MARC SAMUELSON, CONFERENCE CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIRMAN, BSAC

Marc Samuelson welcomed delegates to the 12th BSAC Conference, an annual event made possible by the consistent and generous sponsorship provided by Time Warner.



This year, the event had been renamed to the BSAC Film, TV & Games Conference. This had been in the offing for a few years as it had long been recognised there was now so little left that was unique to any one sector and so much that could be learned from hearing what others were doing. This was the point of BSAC, an organisation that provided a place where all of the different sectors across media and entertainment could talk to one another, find out how other parts of the business worked, learn their problems were and discover what they were doing to solve them.

This Conference provided a snapshot of BSAC's year-round work, and delegates could see the breadth of the organisation by looking at the list of topics covered in the last year, which was included in the Conference packs. The event had sometimes surprised attendees: last year, there had been a speaker from the adult entertainment industry, but he had spoken about the challenges to the economics that his business was facing, such as competing with free and pirated content or the collapse of DVD sales, which would be familiar to everybody in the room.

Regular delegates might notice an absence from this year's line-up: no Minister – the campaign trail trumped speaking at events such as this. However, anybody who wanted their policy fix could find a recent BSAC policy paper, which provided a risk assessment of what would happen to the UK audiovisual sector – the most developed and advanced in Europe – if Britain were to withdraw from the EU.

The British audiovisual industries were a great national success story: pioneering in every way, the sector was creating jobs, generating billions in export revenues for the nation and enriching our culture in every possible way. The numbers were unbelievable: TV exports, £1.28 billion; film, £1.34 billion; the gross value added from games, estimated at £1.74 billion.

It was possible to tell just how vibrant, successful and international the UK's industry from the Conference's line-up.

The opening keynote would come from a UK broadcaster, launched and owned by a sort of Australian American, which had now expanded to Germany and Italy, whose recent hit series featured American and Danish leads investigating a crime in Norway. He would be talking, amongst other things, about the nature of international co-production deals that he had made with American broadcasters.

There would be a conversation with the founder and MD of a UK company, now bought by an American studio, that has a deal with a Danish toy manufacturer to make video games set in locations as varied as the 17th century Caribbean to the deserts of Tootsie.

We would be hearing from the CEO of a UK mini major, owned by a French company. Their recent hit Christmas film, set in London, was about a marmalade eating bear from darkest Peru.

And it would feature the founder of a UK independent production company, which had just been bought by an American media conglomerate and whose recent work includes US co-productions, but who also made a very British TV series that it sold to 212 territories around the world.

Some themes from previous conferences would also be revisited, one of which was building audiences for online video. In 2013, YouTube video stars had explained how they built direct relationships with their fans and how the medium was a way for young film makers to by-pass conventional gatekeepers. Today we would be hearing whether such creators had aspirations in conventional media, which was undoubtedly keen to access their large, young and extremely TV resistant followings.

Of course, not that everything predicted at the Conference had always come to pass: eight years ago, a speaker from a technology company had explained their enthusiasm about the potential of building Freeview tuners into phones; they had seen this as the best way to allow viewers to watch content on the move without overloading the network. And, in 2009, Tesco, then the UK's second biggest DVD retailer, had explained how their expansion into hitherto untouched non-food areas was going to create lifetime customer loyalty... Still, the odd blip aside, BSAC had been at the forefront of every major industry trend and, since its formation, prescient at providing policy leadership to the industry. This Conference gave only a small taste of the work that BSAC does all year round.

He was delighted to be back at the Royal Institution, also the home of the famous Christmas lectures. The work behind 14 Nobel prizes had been first presented here, and past speakers had included some of the greatest scientists, engineers and thinkers in the world, delivering presentations of ground breaking advances, including in electricity, chemistry, physics and medicine.

Many of the underpinnings of our industry had been presented on this site. In 1839, William Fox Talbot's calotype had been announced; the process, described as 'painting with light,' was one of the forerunners of modern photography. In 1879, the Royal Institution hosted the first demo of Muybridge's Zoopraxiscope, which was the world's first movie projector. And in 1926, John Logie Baird had given the second ever demonstration of television.

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