
LIGHTING TECHNOLOGY

STLD Column by Bentley Miller



Theatre TV — A Concept For High Definition

The ideas for this article coalesced as a result of my continuing examination of High Definition Imaging Systems.

As part of this process, I attended the Advanced Television Systems conference held in Ottawa last year. The conference provided immediate knowledge of where HDTV stood at that time and gave some indications as to where it was going.

One of the most important segments of the conference was a panel discussion which, among other things, delved into the economics of HD, namely program production, acquisition and distribution.

These elements are the cornerstone of any, production be it film, television or HD imaging.

Without a market there is no rationale for producing a program regardless of the merits of the program material or, as it is beginning to become known as, software. HD imaging is now — and will become more so in the future — an industry driven by software.

It could be easily argued that this was the reason for the acquisition of Columbia pictures by the Sony Corporation of Japan. The purchase gave Sony access to a vast supply of software for the HD market. Vaults

filled with classic films provide a wealth of software that can be transferred from film to the HD format for eventual distribution or sale to the consumer.

The Market For HD

One of the nagging issues that has dogged HD to date is, just what is the market for this new medium? Will it be TV, as it is in Japan, will it be marketed and distributed through a Direct Broadcast Satellite system, or will it be a pay-per-view system?

The possibilities intrigued me.

Since I have been closely following the technical advancements of HD in the *Journal* of the SMPTE, I have come across many articles that relate

to the production aspects of HD.

One concept that I happened on was illustrated in a retrospective entitled *Theatre Television: A History* by Douglas Gomery (pp. 120-123 in the February 1989 issue of the *SMPTE Journal*). This article is about the reaction of the motion picture industry to the introduction of television in the late 1940's and early 1950's.

Theatre television as a concept was developed to protect the financial position of the motion picture studios in the entertainment marketplace.

The processes for implementing the concept were developed between 1947 and 1954, but theatre

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