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by THOMSON

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TVBEUROPE

Spectrum auctions pose danger

Conference Analysis

by Kate Bulkley

Catherine Smadja, head of special projects, policy and strategy at the BBC, warned other countries against following the UK plans to auction off spectrum freed up from analogue switchover to the highest bidder. "Service and technology neutral auctions as planned by Ofcom will not deliver an optimal outcome from a public efficiency point of view," Smadja told the audience at The Great Spectrum Landrush session that opened the conference yesterday. "I hope other countries will follow a different route."

Smadja said that Ofcom's auction plans have several potential pitfalls, including preventing smaller, less well-heeled operators from bidding. "This world is mov-



Catherine Smadja: "Spectrum belongs to the public not the deepest pockets"

ing very quickly and this should lead us to some modesty. We should not be taking decisions that will lead to indefinite licenses in this changing environment." She argued that the final aim for the allocation of the "digital dividend" should be about delivering public value. "Spectrum belongs

to the public. It is not only a question of money," she said.

Further, Smadja said that the way Ofcom was packaging the spectrum is "not neutral" and that there is a worry that operators with "the deepest pockets" could end up "hoarding spectrum." However, David Murray, senior

advisor to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) in the US said that after raising \$19.6 billion in March in its auction of the 7000MHz band, the US is very happy with the auction approach to spectrum allocation.

The BBC is planning to launch a DTT service in HD in November of 2009 and Smadja said that HD is part of a "natural migration not a luxury product." She added: "The public service broadcasters need DTT to deliver universal coverage and the HD is part of that."

Changing Ofcom's mind is going to be an uphill battle for the broadcaster although Greg Bensberg, principal advisor on broadcasting at Ofcom, said that it is still in the consulting phase of its decision about how to allocate the digital dividend.

Digital rogue buys F35

by David Fox

Rogue Element Films took delivery of the first Sony F35 CineAlta camera sold by Band Pro Munich at the exhibition yesterday. It is the first of eight sold in Europe.

However, Band Pro faces difficulty convincing buyers with existing film camera inventories to make the switch to digital because the new cameras would not hire at a pre-

mium. "There is not one confirmed order for this in the US," revealed Amnon Band, owner of Band Pro. "The market is resisting this with a vengeance. It's too expensive."

However, for Dan Mulligan, cinematographer and Rogue's MD, the investment is worth it because Rogue is already a high-end digital specialist and the F35 fits perfectly with its existing product stock.

"We bought Vipers when no one was interested and made them work. They repaid our investment," Mulligan noted.

Compared to film production, he believes digital makes sense overall. "I will guarantee you 25% saving on the whole production," said Mulligan.

He sees the F35 as "the next logical step for digital cinematography for the independent sector."

11. C40



This happy Band: Mulligan takes delivery of first F35 from Amnon Band



IABM awards innovation: At a special ceremony last night, the IABM announced the winners of its 2008 Design and Innovation awards, including the coveted IABM Peter Wayne Award for Design and Innovation. Phabrix collected this prize for its product SxA, which the judges felt exemplified the spirit of innovation the Award seeks to recognise. For the second time, there were four Awards for Excellence. These were awarded to Omneon for ProCast, Quantel for Pablo Stereo3D, Tandberg Television for iPlex Ultra Compression Transcoder, and Thomson for its LDK8300 HD high speed camera. At the ceremony, the Tom McGann Training Award for 2009 was also announced. It was awarded to Prasar Bharati, Staff Training Institute, India. Pictured: Phabrix managing director Philip Adams receiving the Peter Wayne Award from Roger Stanwell (right) and Award presenter Ray Snoddy.

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