

ISDCF Main Meeting Notes – November 13, 2024
In Person at Harman / Zoom



2024 Sponsoring Companies: AMC, Christie, Barco, Deluxe, Dolby, EIKON, GDC Technologies, Harkins Theatres, Marcus Theatres, Paramount, Pixelogic, Qube, Samsung/Harman, Sharp/NEC, Sony Pictures, Texas Instruments, Universal Pictures, Village Cinemas Australia, Walt Disney Pictures, Warner Bros., Xperi/DTS

Upcoming Meetings

- January 13, 2025 (Monday) Closed caption device plugfest at Deluxe
- January 16, 2025 Thursday 10am After ICTA - Location TBD (probably Universal)
(Possible Audio Demos at Deluxe in morning)
- February 12, 2025 Wednesday 10am - Zoom only
- March 19, 2025 - Wednesday - Location TBD plus Zoom
- March 31, 2025 CinemaCon - Cinema Systems Summit (9am to 3pm)
- April 1, 2025 CinemaCon - Evening ICTA / ISDCF TechTalks

Part 1: General Reporting

Housekeeping:

- Zoom meeting (provided by ISDCF)
- Set next meeting dates (above).
- Thank you ISDCF for support of the Chairman.
- Thank you to Dean Bullock for providing general expenses and admin support.
- Meeting notes from October 2, 2024 approved and to post to open website

Since meeting notes are having more distribution via LinkedIn etc, maybe make the notes more concise. A suggestion was to have AI do an short version. Some appreciate the longer notes. The suggestion of a summary version for posting may be appropriate and the longer verbose version to be for members only (and distributed to members, like they are now).

We could put the current meeting notes behind a simple member-only password protected section. InterSociety board will review this. For now, full meeting notes will be posted to ISDCF website as well as sending directly to members.

- Legal reminder / press reminder / Antitrust Disclaimer. The official antitrust guidelines are posted on our website and are linked from the main ISDCF page. A short verbal overview of guidelines was given. Please no social media for discussions held at ISDCF.

Organizational Issues:

InterSociety Board:

President: Steve LLamb

VP: Reiner Doetzkie

Secretary / Treasurer: Dean Bullock

Executive Director: Jerry Pierce - and chairman ISDCF

Members: Susie Beiersdorf, Mark Collins, Sean Romano, Don Tannenbaum, Mark Waterston

Note: Board terms are ending for Mark Collins, Susie Beiersdorf and Don Tannenbaum. (They can run again.) InterSociety will have 4 open positions in December.

InterSociety financial status (about \$20K in the bank). Everything is normal. Invoices will

be issued for 2025 after November meeting. Should finish year with about \$5K in bank. Invoices will start to be issued next week.

ISDCF LinkedIn account has been more active. We encourage participation and cross promotion.

Attendance is at end of these notes.

Action Items from November 13, 2024

1. InterSociety Board to review policy of posting ISDCF meeting notes.
2. Add a pink noise section to the Audio Test material for LED screens. Make some changes to the descriptive images in the test material. Prepare an expectation document for how to listen to the test material.
3. Prepare a new version of the audio test content with suggested changes
4. Revisit the issues with on-screen subtitling. Find approach for fixing the on-screen subtitling issue for International releases. Dean to consider forming subcommittee.
5. Issue announcement and request for participation for the smart phone plugfest in January
6. Request for presentations for the Cinema Systems Summit to be held at CinemaCon
7. Consider creating an InterSociety news letter to replicate the value of original mission.

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Audio Test Material

This morning we held a session to play back the ISDCF's audio test material in a live theater on both a 5.1 screen and an LED screen. The content was created to expose known issues that comes from non-perf screens (like LED walls). We want to verify that sounds are anchored in known positions in the theater and deal with room acoustics / reflections. The mission is primarily to have content to help sound designers in construction and alignment of theater sound systems.

The content (DCP) is posted to <https://isdcf.com/audiotest> for download (no encryption).

There are some changes needed to the test material, but it clearly will be successful in evaluating audio systems.

We need to add a section of pink noise rotating around the space. We need to change the graphics to better show where the sound is expected. We need to have a “coming next” indication on the screen to help prepare the listener for the next segment. We need a timeline on the screen for all tests.

The most revealing sections were the soundtrack from “The Patriot” where it was very clear the fill was different between theaters.

One observation was that the sound (from The Patriot) was different between the two rooms. In particular the sense of space was much more limited in the room with the LED screen - the mix sounded distance. It also sounded different depending where in the room you were sitting. Sitting in the front section of the theater was different from the middle/back rows of the theater.

Another observation was the moving from standard theater to LED theater back to standard theater was very helpful in making the comparison between systems. This should be part of the recommended practice for using the test material.

We also need to define what are the expectations for playback. Do we expect the front of the room to sound the same as the back of the room? Do we expect to have the same theater “fill” between rooms?

One comment was that many of the seats in this theater were too close to the screen and those seats should not be considered as suitable places to sit and we shouldn't be listening in these seats. Maybe there should be a recommendation to be a minimum distance from the screen (probably 1 screen height).

Who is this material being made for? Certainly not the experts that are doing the design of audio systems - they already know this. It is good to expose film makers to what/how theaters perform and what is needed to meet their expectations. We have started a document for “expectations.”

An early criteria for acceptance (for new screen types/audio systems) was to have the mixer come and listen to their movie track and indicate if it was an acceptable mix for their movie. This would not be extendable to a wide deployment, but it was one studios technique for early systems.

There was a discussion of the particular screen. A discussion of the location of the speakers (above/below the screen) and the various crossover points for the speakers at the top/

bottom of screen. One complaint about the 'loudness' of the sound at the back of the room (a desire to turn it down). [This may be an EQ problem and it may be easy to fix.]

It is clear that the industry is testing/evolving systems for LED screens. It seems the content that ISDCF has created will be good for testing, evaluating and improving systems by manufacturers.

What is the reference listening environment? It should be in the document for describing this test content. The goal is to make the theater experience better. It took 80 years of practice for the recommended practice for standard perf screens. We don't yet know what we need to recommend for non-perf screens. LED systems may be a totally different system and set of recommendations. We think best practices will involve both human listening and electronic testing.

Do we want to make sure that the place for the best image (like 1.5 screen heights) should also be the place for the optimum sound? Or do we need a uniformity across the entire auditorium?

One big question is if the content we created suitable for testing. And yes, the general opinion was this content (with the addition of a pink noise segment) is suitable.

Things to add to the current content:

- On-screen note indicating what's next ("Upcoming are gun shots from center channel", etc.)
- Fix lip slap for Drea's voice
- Put speaker location full width on screen
- Add timeline for full test (you are here)
- Panning pink noise
- Note that image quality is not great
- (Maybe have gunshots in surround of Patriot sections)

Comment: "If you are going to build an audio system for a room with one wall that is acoustically reflective, you need to custom design the audio system for that room." It's different than a room with a perf screen.

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Academy Archivists

There was an announcement that 16 archivists were let go from the Academy. There is a real concern about this move and there is a campaign to ask AMPAS to rehire them. There is a petition to make change on this move by the Academy.

<https://www.change.org/p/to-the-ampas-board-of-governors-rehire-the-the-film-archive-and-library-16>

<https://www.thewrap.com/academy-cuts-16-staffers-in-restructuring-of-archive-and-library/>

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Global SMPTE Roll Out / CTP Test

There was a demonstration / playback test of the DCI Compliance Test Plan (CTP) subtitle and caption content on three different systems. This was done to get an understanding of what was being tested by the CTP and to see if it gave us an understanding of why some regions are reluctant to make the shift to SMPTE-DCP.

The concern is that it is very difficult to go International with SMPTE-DCP because of subtitling issues. Interop-DCP is more consistent in playback devices since there is one implementation.

Given that subtitles are so critical to the presentation of digital cinema it is remarkable that these rendering systems are fairly sloppy on how they present images on the screen. All these systems pass CTP and two of them used the wrong colorspace in rendering PNG images. Which means PNG subtitles would not have the intended color when rendering - yellow would not be the intended yellow - white would be white. The positioning and spacing of the characters was different for all three systems. And some of the text rendering was not as intended (and different) from other systems.

As an industry, we should see this is a real problem. We want perfect pictures and perfect audio. What is out there today does not meet our criteria.

This has been studied extensively by a SMPTE committee. Harold Hallikainen provided the summary documents for this committee (ask Jerry for a copy if you are interested).

The solution may be an open source rendering solution. This is a critical need for the industry. Other industries have solved this issue and there are many resources available. There may be other approaches to be considered.

We need to have a description of the end-to-end subtitle pipeline to understand how we might solve the problem. Sounds like an subcommittee. Must include International, SMPTE, ISO, W3C, Japan cinema, Japan streaming, plus more. Not a quick fix. Back up, regroup to find a solution.

One solution was to use png only for subtitles. This would move the issue from a rendering engine at playback to a better rendering engine in mastering.

We will address again in January meeting.

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Smart Phones / Accessibility

Proposal to have a smart-phone plugfest (Show and Tell) on Monday January 13, 2025 at Deluxe. We can get content from a studio for demonstration of: 1) closed captions (English) 2) translated captions (alt language) 3) alternative spoken languages (audio) 4) hearing impaired audio track (enhanced spoken) 5) visually impaired audio track 6) sign language visual track.

The plugfest would be an ISDCF event with active participation by the Cinema Foundation.

We would ask each company to describe how they do content prep, how they distribute, the user experience and a discussion of security. Then a full demo using content provided by Paramount. The target audience are exhibitors and studios.

Cinema Foundations's Center for Innovation and Technology is working in this area. In particular looking at a way to "centralize" the gathering of source content and distribution.

Comment that ADA rules allow use of personal devices, but still require theaters to provide devices. Response: we are a long way from talking about solutions to the ADA requirements and possible changes to the rules.

We NEED to have a call for participation for the January 13 event. Definitely before Thanksgiving.

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Website and IT updates Naming Convention

We received a request for 4-character facility code update from a current limit of a 3 character code. We discussed briefly about “it’s a convention, not a standard” and the desire to move away from the CTT naming convention and move to CPL metadata, so we are going ahead and allow a 4 character code for facilities (but not advertise it widely).

We received a request to add a link to a set of ebooks on security. It will be added to <https://www.isdcf.com/other-resources/> (which is an existing page on our web).

Barco HDR Labeling - still waiting for Barco to publish on their website.

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15 minute break

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ICTA/InterSociety/ISDCF Conference at next CinemaCon.

Frank and Jerry are co-chairs of the “Cinema System Summit” for CinemaCon 2025. Monday March 31, 2025 from 9am-ish to 3pm. This is NOT just about ISDCF topics. General topics for technology in the theaters.

We are thinking of asking individuals to make presentations - similar to the HPA Tech Retreat. We have a lot of possible topics.

We identified an issue of finding new people for our industry and also how to KEEP them in our industry. No longer single issue expertise is needed, but a wide breath of topics.

Our target audience are the current attendees of CinemaCon - generally middle management for theaters.

We have a committee doing the planning - if you want to help the effort reach out to Jerry or Frank to get on the list. The committee will meet following today’s ISDCF meeting.

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Image Artifacts Issues (aka JPEG2000 issues)

Legacy issues. Some work being done, but nothing to report.

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DCI Update

Nothing to report.

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SMPTE update

pDCDM Under DP vote.

Journal update underway.

ST429-16 Additional Composition Metadata and Guidelines (behind a paywall)

27C-10 Study Group on Origins of Digital Cinema - Contact Howard or CJ.

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EDCF Update

Convention in February - after HPA

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The Cinema Foundation / CIT

No update.

Action Items from October 2, 2024

1. Write up recommended practice for the audio test content. Including the objectives of each of the segment of the test content. **In Process**
2. Reach out to get Japanese subtitle test content to post on ISDCF, if possible. **Need to send a new request.**
3. Ask Yoshi to post his observations to the ISDCF members reflector **Nope.**
4. Start planning on a demonstration of closed caption demo for January (both in-band and cloud delivery methods) **In Process**
5. Ask that the notes on Deadpool subtitle issues be posted to the ISDCF members reflector **Did not get done (should it?)**
6. Create a issue tracker for topics that come up in ISDCF (like Japanese subtitles) **Needed. Next time?**
7. Barco to provide the CTT name for Light Steering content. **Waiting on them to publish on website.**
8. Call a meeting for planning of a one-day conference at CinemaCon/ICTA **In Process**
9. Respond to ICTA call for content for the January ICTA/LA Seminar Series. **ISDCF will**

present.

10. Consider methods to encourage new folks to participate in theatrical ecosystem. **Should be part of InterSociety issue. Could we provide "speakers" to schools?**
11. Implement a monitoring system for the Amazon to prevent abuse. **Done**
12. Call a subgroup to find alternative to CTT in total workflow **Dean to follow up**

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Attendance on last page.