

digital dialogue

CONFERENCE

THE POTENTIAL OF TECHNOLOGY IN THE 'ATTENTION ECONOMY'

Capturing and maintaining attention is key to sustainability

Dubai, UAE (May Day, 2018) – “*Are creative Technologies disruptive or revolutionary? Obviously, both*”, so says **Anthony Lilley OBE – a Professor of Creative Industries at Ulster University in Northern Ireland and the Director of Magic Lantern Productions**. Lilley was speaking about how society uses technology to tell stories and make our cultures at the 5th edition of the Digital Dialogue, a thought-leadership platform established in 2012 and facilitated by MultiChoice to address various issues facing the video entertainment industry on the continent and share industry best-practice.

Drawing from his experience as a media producer, businessman and technology expert who has worked on many of the cutting-edge developments in television, live events and broader business. Lilley shared insights on the effects of technology on a range of industries which he has witnessed first-hand, and has been involved in shaping many of them, saying, “*The human experience has always been connected to technology. Whether you’re telling a story at the fireside or via digital media – those are the technology advances of the time.*”

“*Digital is more about how we human beings and society connect with each other. But how do you grab attention, create meaning and tell stories? How do we engage with people’s passions and what does it all mean for our culture? The answers to these questions can be answered by three major factors affecting content businesses of today: video on-demand, personal/mobile and that we are inundated with data and intelligence which can do new things,*” says Lilley.

Lilley contends that while people are centre of finding their way around the digital world the same way the GPS blue dot on a map relies on the user to navigate to a destination “*there’s now more of it in terms of volume and variety of data that was previously not measurable and it’s all coming at us at an incredible velocity*”. He believes this variety, volume and velocity of data has created value in ‘human attention’ in what he calls the ‘Attention Economy’. “*We only have so much time to capture people’s attention and those who can capture it, can sell it to someone else. You can’t force to give you their attention anymore when there’s content everywhere and businesses that understand the value of attention and can capture it, can sell it to someone else. That has always been the way TV companies sell advertisement space – because there’s a captive audience that is paying attention.*”

Lilley also delved into the creation of ‘fandoms’ in the ‘human experience as it results in self-identification, social cohesion and way of reaching out to others. *“Being a fan is not only emotionally valuable to the individual but also commercially valuable to a brand. That affinity to your brand creates trust and loyalty - human values that lead to a brand or business’ sustainability. Our job is to explore those opportunities that can create fans and put them in front of people,”* he concluded.

Note to Editors:

- For more information, please visit www.multichoiceafrica.com and follow the social media conversation on the hashtag #DigitalDialogue2018 and tag Instagram: MultiChoice Africa; Twitter: MultiChoiceAF; Facebook: MultiChoice Africa.
- **Images of the speaker are available for download here:** <https://we.tl/wNKz4SqZ9b>

Speaker Bio: Anthony Lilley OBE – Professor of Creative Industries at Ulster University

Anthony Lilley is a media producer, businessman and technology expert who has worked on many of the cutting-edge developments in television, live events and broader business. In a diverse career, Anthony has witnessed first-hand the effects of technology on a range of industries, and has been involved in shaping many of them. Starting out in TV, he saw huge disruption within the media and was closely involved in the production and development of everything from interactive TV programmes to red button and on-demand platforms. He’s also worked with the BBC on a range of online projects aimed at leading, not just meeting viewer expectations. Headhunted by lottery operator Camelot, Anthony was tasked with looking at how a heavily regulated sector can deal with potentially huge shifts and bridging the divide between rapid developments in consumer technology with the longer timeframes of regulation and legislation. He also worked with Ofcom, the Department of Culture, Media, and Sport, and the Gambling Commission on addressing regulatory and legal issues. More broadly Anthony looks at what technology is doing to organisations, society and individuals. He considers the attention paid to data and its application. He views the use of data by many as like driving; focusing on data as the solution to all questions is like driving only by looking in the rear-view mirror - useful, but not the whole story. Describing himself as a ‘positive sceptic’ and ‘an early adopter with a bin-full of old gadgets’. Anthony looks at what the future holds and why not everything will necessarily change. With examples of how industries and businesses have adapted (both successfully and unsuccessfully) to changes in technology, environment and consumer expectations, he also addresses ‘the death of digital’ – it’s a part of the world, our lives, and business strategy – it’s no longer new, engendering fear or excitement, but normal. The question now is what you do with it.

About the Digital Dialogue Conference:

The 2018 Digital Dialogue Conference is a thought leadership platform facilitated by MultiChoice Africa in order to foster a better understanding of the future direction of the video entertainment industry in Africa. This is the 5th edition of the conference which was established in 2012 to create a better understanding of Digital Migration and its impact on Africa’s digital landscape. Since then, the independent and growing platform has been critical in fostering a better understanding and building knowledge on video entertainment and Digital terrestrial markets while creating necessary conversations with thought leaders about various industry-related issues.

About MultiChoice:

Entertainment is a powerful way to tell stories that open our minds, bring people together around shared passions, and connect us to new realities. It makes us laugh and cry. It informs, it educates and it inspires. MultiChoice is a video entertainment company, and our role is to enrich lives. Our mission is to deliver value to our customers by making great entertainment more accessible. We find and develop the right mix of content and deliver it to millions of people across Africa – anytime, anywhere. Whether it's local telenovelas, the excitement of world class sport or the latest global blockbusters, our investment in leading-edge content and technology systems deliver the shows that people love into their hands and their living rooms. We listen to our customers to understand their changing lives, the pressures they face and what matters most to them. We are committed to using these insights to put customers at the heart of all the decisions that each of us make every day. We're reshaping our business to improve our customers' experience, whenever and wherever they engage with us. Born and bred in Africa, MultiChoice is a team of more than 2750 full time and over 14 thousand contractors and independent agencies and accredited installers who to collectively deliver the greatest entertainment in the world to more than 49 countries across Sub-Saharan Africa. We are managed and run by local people, and strive to provide all our employees with new opportunities. We're proud of the contribution we make to our communities, and our business has grown hand-in-hand with local economies by forging long-term partnerships with governments, national broadcasters and entrepreneurs. As the continent's leading funder of sport and local production, we've built skills and capacity to become the backbone of content that matters to our customers. As Africa continues to change rapidly, the entertainment industry is ever more relevant. We want to use our influence and resources to play a positive role in Africa, helping to grow Africa's people and creative industries into vibrant, economic powerhouses. It's by creating value for our customers, our employees and society that we'll build a successful business for the future.