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Hollywood's New Leaders 2011

Posted: Mon., Oct. 10, 2011, 2:00pm PT

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Five ways the new generation is shaping the industry

Hollywood's New Leaders 2011

By TODD LONGWELL

Future execs will need fresh insight into the biz. Experts weigh in on what they should look for.

CONVERGENCE

All those hours spent simultaneously text-ing, talking, gaming and status-updating were not spent in vain by Hollywood's new leaders. The ability to juggle a multitude of distractions will serve them well as they oversee the complete integration of mobile devices, appliances and entertainment media (TV, movies, music, gaming, the Internet), transforming a diverse set of experiences into one giant virtual multitask, where every element is hyperlinked to audio, video, information, games and products.

"I'm going to click on the lead character's shirt because I think it's cool and I will portal towards the place where I can buy that shirt with my embedded credit card," says John Gaeta, the Oscar-winning visual effects designer ("The Matrix") who founded Float Hybrid Entertainment, dedicated to creating content and control formats for emerging connected platforms. "Or I can click on the location and go to pages about the setting of the story."

Using such multiple motion-sensor devices as Microsoft's Kinect for Xbox, people will be able to digitize themselves and their surroundings to create a common, photorealistic virtual space where they can interact with each other from any angle.

"The whole idea is going to evolve further and further until it's embedded in every TV screen, on every phone," Gaeta says. "In one regard, it could be super creepy, like big brother, but (it could also) allow people to share experiences that are so much further beyond the barriers of written text, avatars or standard webcams."

DISTRIBUTION

As home entertainment systems become more sophisticated and interconnected, with bigger and



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cheaper flat-screen TVs with 3D pictures and 7.1 surround sound, many believe the revenue from brick-and-mortar exhibition will decrease.

"The very large event films will stay in (theaters) for a longer time, like a Broadway show," predicts Peter Guber, chairman of the Mandalay Entertainment Group. "Or the content may be available at the same time in the theater, on disc, streaming and an enhanced mobile experience, maybe at different price points."

Radio and television programming will increasingly be consumed via satellite and the Internet, where it can be accompanied by precision-targeted advertising.

For instance, "if you've shared with me that you're a Saints fan, I know that I should run you the Esurance spot with Drew Brees in it rather than Tom Brady," says Stephan Sloan, director of the brokerage firm Media Services Group.

GLOBALIZATION

Because of the growing number of production incentives, both domestic and international, most studio pics now shoot outside Los Angeles. At the same time, the majors are increasingly relying on foreign investors to finance their film slates, while expanding operations into emerging markets such as Asia. The bulk of the profits come from overseas, too. According to the MPAA, foreign box office reached an all-time high of \$21.2 billion in 2010, while the domestic returns stayed flat at \$10.6 billion.

The way things are trending, is it possible the future show business leaders won't be based in Hollywood?

"Although there may be decentralization of the financing sources, the talent universe and the breeding ground for the vast majority of commercial projects is still (in L.A.) and there doesn't seem to be much sign of that changing," says Stuart Ford, CEO of finance and distrib shingle IM Global. "Hollywood still is where talent from all over the world gravitates to get their movies made ... (so) I think the key decision-makers on production and marketing issues will always be here. But that doesn't mean that at a corporate level boardrooms need to be in Hollywood. The bigger fiscal and strategic decisions will be made wherever the ultimate decision-makers need to be."

CREATIVE

Technical advances are making it easier to produce good-looking, marketable, ultra-low-budget films such as "Paranormal Activity."

As viral marketing and streaming become more sophisticated, self-distribution becomes more feasible, giving rise to the possibility that the next Steven Spielberg or Martin Scorsese will start out making films in a garage in Iowa and stay there.

"In any town anywhere, you have people with different skills," says Evan Glodell, writer-director-producer-star of the micro-budget Sundance hit "Bellflower" "If you need props and specific things built, you can network online and find people who would be more than excited to build you a custom car, a set or whatever it is, especially if it's going to be in a movie."

But what exactly will constitute a movie 10 years from now?

Gaeta imagines an interactive experience where the viewer can untoggle the camera and freely roam through surrounding locations and crisscross storylines.

"If you look back at television, the sitcom didn't exist until that small box came into being," says Teri Schwartz, dean of the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television. "In its time, it was a radical departure of how one told a story. And in the future I think we're going to see new forms coming out of this very dynamic intersection of how the technology pushes narrative structure and how narrative structure pushes technology. And what that form is, nobody knows yet."

TECHNOLOGY

Finally, the technology that underlies all entertainment content creation, distribution, display and consumption is undergoing the most rapid and drastic evolution in its history -- and the switch to digital has put the transformatin into hyperdrive.

Cinematographers who shot on film stock that evolved slowly over a hundred years can now choose from among an ever-shifting array of digital systems with sometimes vastly different chip characteristics.



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The Annex Space @ Hollywood & Highland, Los Angeles, CA

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November 8, 2011
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The iPad is changing not only the way we view images but also the way we work.

"Change isn't even linear anymore, it's three-dimensional," says Mandalay's Guber. "There are different interdisciplinary events affecting what the entertainment universe will be. The changes you might conjure (in 10 years) would be indistinguishable from magic."

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