



Community Television Association of Maine

Winter 2012

SOUTH PORTLAND WELCOMES CTAM'S WINTER MEETING

With the weather we've been having it didn't feel that much like Winter, but more than 20 CTAM members made the trip to South Portland for the quarterly meeting. Tony Vigue and Moe Amaral hosted the gathering and the group was joined by South Portland City Councilor Maxine Beecher, who sits on the city's Cable TV Committee.



Maxine

First up, following the introductions, the group heard from Brian Leonard of *Occupy Maine*. Many are familiar with the group's five month encampment at Lincoln Park in Portland – one that ended peacefully in mid February. Brian came to CTAM to publicize the new *Occupy Maine* television show that the group is producing using the studio and facilities of the Community Television Network in Portland. *Occupy Maine* is interested in distributing the program throughout Maine and CTAM members watched several clips from the program to give them a taste of what it has to offer.

While the first installment was more of a history lesson, subsequent editions had much more Maine content – which appealed to the assembled audience. The group is making sponsored downloads of the program available via *PegMedia* (Maine stations only) and will mail a DVD to any station that is unable to download it. For more information about the group and the program contact Brian Leonard at (757) 672-3754 (Cell); (207) 221-5899 (office) or via e-mail at brian@occupymetv.org



Brian Leonard (right) shows a clip from "Occupy Maine" TV

Occupy Maine was followed by a brief presentation by Charles Paige of *TelVue*. The company has introduced new *V(ideo)OIP/Cloud Servers* as well as streaming and *VOD* content via *Roku*. *TelVue* brought along a raffle prize of a *Roku HD* streaming box, which was won by Tom Handel of *CTN 5* in Portland. Charlie can be reached via e-mail at cpaige@telvue.com.

Following *TelVue* were brief comments by Barry Real of *Boreal Media Technologies*, a broadcast equipment vendor in Hudson, NH. Barry's contact information is (603) 933-3214 and the company's website is "boreal-media.com"

Also on the bill was Eric Nelson from *Access AV* in New Hampshire. Eric's contact info is (603) 224-2300 or via e-mail at "eric@accessavnh.com"

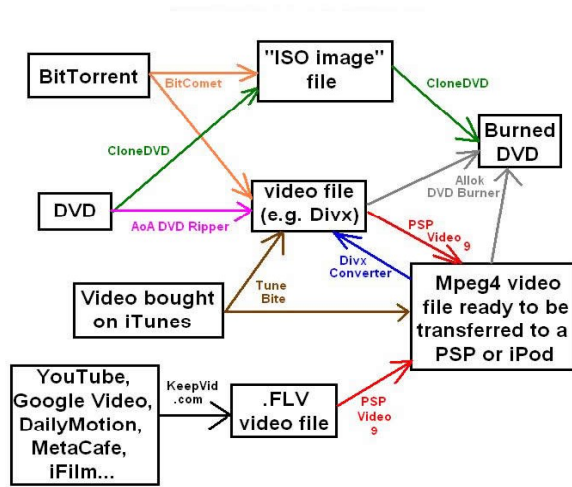
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VIDEO ENCODING & TRANSCODING

IN THE CENTER RING: YOUTUBE VS ACCESS

Video Management



Note: using Windows XP or any program that can burn data CDs, a Divx file can be burned onto a CD-ROM, and this Divx CD can then be played on many new DVD players.

If the above diagram is all too familiar to those of you who struggle with getting video from submission to transmission you're not alone. Moe Amaral of SPCTV led a lively discussion about the ins, outs, ups, downs and otherwise total confusion surrounding video encoding and transcoding. The problem, of course, is while there are "standards" there is a wide variety of individual elements that make up those standards. While the final result may be universally the same, individual software or hardware developers can achieve the same end in a wide variety of ways.

There are several programs that can help.

One is "Super" available at erightsoft.com. This Windows-only program will convert anything to anything. It can be a bit confusing at first since it has, in Moe's words, "every setting known to man." Moe gave a brief tour of the software as part of his discussion.

Other useful programs are "fixmpeg," available at labs.trms.com. This bit of software doesn't convert video but will fix audio errors such as sample rate discrepancies or problems with AC3 audio with MPEG-2 Video. And of course always be aware of potential copyright infringements when working with video that is not your own.

Next up on the Tuesday night card was the battle between YouTube and Public Access. Has YouTube made Public Access TV irrelevant? With video cameras in every handheld electronic device, why do people need Public Access?

In the words of Ned Lightner from Belfast, "YouTube is My Friend." Public Access is about local content. It is our greatest benefit and our unique advantage. Stations should embrace YouTube video. Encourage viewers to send you their videos to air on your station. Just because it wasn't shot by an "access" camera doesn't make it any less access-worthy.

Remember, if Cable TV goes away, Public Access goes away. Diversification is the key. Public support for your station is not about technology but about *politics*. The more local content you have, regardless of the source, the more local support your station will have. The easier it is to watch video on your station – or on your station's website – the more overall viewers you'll have. Find those in your town who depend on access television. The local newspaper reporter probably uses the video of the Town Council meeting to write their story – get the reporter on your team. While cable companies are not fans of Public Access – to say the least – they know it is a retention tool, something they can offer that satellite TV cannot. Use that to your advantage.

ACM UPDATE

Our own JP Fortier was named to the ACM Northeast Region. The regional video festival will be November 1-2 in Plymouth, MA and the ACM National Conference is in Chicago. Please let Sally Ann Hebert know if you plan on attending either event.

There was some discussion about a CTAM Video Festival. It was suggested that judging could be done remotely, instead of having the judges gather at one location – or having to send multiple DVDs around. Access Producer Matt Power suggested he might be willing to help coordinate such a project. More to come on that later.

CTAM WEBSITE

Bill Severance is making changes to the website's design and layout. More changes to come – check it out and send in your ideas about what you'd like to see on ctamaine.org

CTAM ARCHIVE PROJECT

LEGISLATIVE POLICY UPDATE

Brian Knoblock & Ned Lightner gave a brief update on the Archive Project. MPEG-2 will be the contribution standard – either via DVD or FTP. The required documentation, including the budget, revised project narrative, and other forms are being produced and will be sent to the two archive departments for final approval. They anticipate the project to begin mid-March and run through the end of 2012. So start gathering your video and get it ready to send in.

We hope to have the project archivist Anne Allee at the next meeting to provide an outline of the project and to get things rolling. We will also make an effort to get Gemma Peretta from Northeast Historic Films to our next meeting in Farmington to talk about video archiving.



discussion of the Archive Project

CTAM

In late February we learned that Maine Senator Olympia Snowe has decided not to run for re-election this November. The impact of that decision on pending legislation is unknown at this time. Several contenders for her position are PEG friendly, including former(Independent) Governor, Angus King, so we are hopeful that PEG issues will continue to receive positive support from any new Senator that is elected.

Tony Vigue sent a letter on behalf of CTAM to Matthew Hussey, a member of Senator Snowe's Staff in Washington and Cheryl Leeman who is the Special Projects Director for Senator Snowe in Maine, thanking the senator for her support over the years.

*"Dear Matt and Cheryl,
Words cannot express how disappointed we were to learn of Senator Snowe's decision not to run again. Everyone knows what a mess Congress is in right now, that is all you hear about in daily conversation these days. But the level of dysfunction must be truly massive and perpetual for a consensus builder like Senator Snowe to cite partisanship as the major factor in her decision after all these years!*

*As you know, her unique position on the Commerce Committee has been of special interest to us because she understands the importance of a healthy, diverse media **and** providing public access to it. While her actions on our behalf have not been as immediate or resounding as we had hoped at times, we know she has always had our best interests at heart. For example, we were confident that she would work on our behalf for passage of the CAP Act when the time was right. Alas, it was not to be.*

"We will miss her voice in Congress, and although we don't know of her future plans, we are sure we will see her again on one of our community television channels if she continues her service to the people of Maine in a different capacity.

"On behalf of the Community Television Association of Maine, thanks again to Senator Snowe and to you for your help and I hope our paths cross again soon.

- Tony"

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT?

Some propose topics for upcoming meetings:

- Station Promotion
- Developing a friends & producers list
- Who's watching – and how do you know?
- Access TV on a budget (who doesn't do that?)
- Keeping the lights on – Fundraising & Sales
- Joint session with Media Educators of Maine

PLEASE TELL US WHICH ONES YOU'D LIKE TO SEE

MEMBERSHIPS EXPIRED ON JUNE 30 HAVE YOU RENEWED YOURS?

2012 MEETINGS

April 24th - FARMINGTON
June 26 - HARPSWELL

CTAM is *your* organization. One way to show your support is to attend the meetings. They're a great way to keep in touch with fellow members and to out the latest in technology, trends or policies that will help you run your station better.



State House in 1836 (The Original Bulfinch Design)
from a painting by Charles Codman (1800 - 1842)

CAPITOL VIEW

“CAP” ACT UPDATE
by Tony Vigue

The Community Access Preservation Act (HR 1746 - the CAP Act)

There are currently 22 Democrats and 1 Republican sponsoring the bill. While Representative Chellie Pingree supports the bill, Mike Michaud is not yet on board. We continue to press his office to join the other co-sponsors – pointing out that this is a “jobs bill.”

- 1. It removes the distinction between "capital" and "operating" in PEG support fees.**
The CAP Act will eliminate that part of the Telecommunications Act that prevents PEG centers from using PEG support for their operating expenses.
- 2. It guarantees that PEG channels are equivalent in quality to all other local commercial stations, network affiliates or PBS.**

Certain cable operators are lumping all PEG channels in a regional area onto one single channel (for instance AT&T’s channel 99). This delivery method discriminates against people who are deaf or hard of hearing because it won’t allow for closed captioning and it is impossible for people who are blind to find the channel through the onscreen menu. It also degrades the signal quality, and causes viewers to have to wade through myriads of menus to get their local PEG channels. PEG channels should be delivered equal to commercial channels or PBS.

- 3. Makes sure local governments can secure funding for PEG channels in exchange for cable operators’ use of public rights-of-way and makes sure local government can have PEG channels.**

The CAP Act provides that PEG channels will receive funding equal up to the historical support it received prior to the damaging statewide/state issued franchising laws^[1]--OR—up to the amount that

operators are required to pay under the new statewide/state issued franchising laws—OR up to 2% of the gross revenue of the cable operator--**whichever is greater**. It also makes sure local government can get a PEG channel if they do not have one, up to three.

- 4. It makes sure that cable operators transmit the PEG channels without charge to the local government.**

This is an important point because in several places cable operators are claiming they can charge local governments for the transmission of the channels. Cable operators are demanding several thousand dollars per year per channel for transmission. This must stop!

- 5. It requires the FCC to undertake a study on PEG.**

The FCC will be required to undertake a study within 180 days of the passage of CAP to analyze the effect of statewide/state issued franchise laws that have passed. It also requires an analysis of the impact of digital conversion on PEG. And it calls for the FCC to make recommendations for changes to the Telecommunications Act to preserve and advance PEG, broadband and localism.

CTAMESSSENGER CONTRIBUTORS & CREDITS

CAPITOL VIEW: Painting by Charles Codman, Maine State Museum; CTAM MEETING: Photos: Brian Knoblock. VIDEO MANAGEMENT DIAGRAM: co-bw.com (Creative Commons License)

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