

# Be a Bursary Winner

By Sara Waddington, Managing Editor, SCTE

**Still not applied for your SCTE bursary? Read about some of our bursary winners' experiences at the FTTH conference, ANGA COM and IBC to help you make up your mind...**

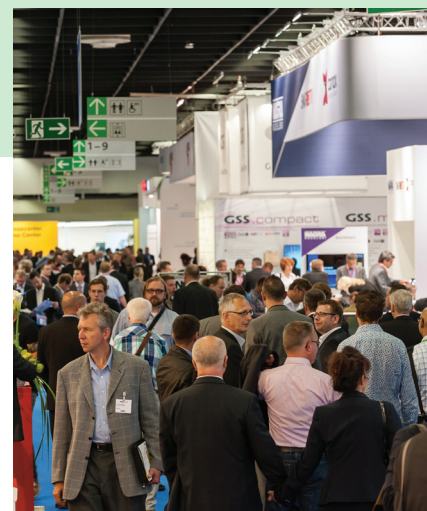
It's that time again! SCTE members are encouraged to submit their bursary applications for three events in 2016 – the FTTH conference and exhibition (Luxembourg), ANGA COM (Cologne) and IBC (Amsterdam). Please email 300 words to [office@thescte.eu](mailto:office@thescte.eu) on why you wish to be considered for the bursary.

The SCTE pays the cost of your flights and accommodation while the show organiser contributes to the bursary package

with a conference pass, enabling you to see the latest technology and market presentations, listen to Keynote speakers and contribute to challenging debates.

Still not sure whether to apply? Why not hear from some of this year's bursary winners to see what you are missing... We highlight comments from some of this year's lucky bursary winners (at ANGA COM, IBC and the FTTH show) to help you make up your mind...

## ANGA COM in Cologne



## Tim Griffiths

**Principal Engineer, Engineering Configuration Control, Access Engineering Serve, Virgin Media**

This was my first visit to ANGA COM - my expectations were high and it did not disappoint. I would firstly like to thank the SCTE in providing bursaries this year to attend, in particular Bev Walker for promptly responding to my emails when I had questions about the event and setting up travel arrangements.

The ANGA COM experience started immediately at Cologne Bonn airport as a number of vendors were on the same flight (Technetix and Teleste) and kindly offered me a lift in one of their taxis into Cologne. I also had another head start as one of the VM Engineering team members, Owen Williams, was also staying at my hotel and, being an ANGA COM stalwart, offered to show me the 'ropes'. This was extremely helpful and cut down time required to find my way around the event - it's a fairly busy place for a 'newbie'.

On the first morning, I went to the SCTE stand (using the map to get my bearings) to meet Bev and the team along with some of the other bursary winners. This was great, immediately making you feel a bit more at home and also knowing you had a place to call 'base camp', where you can return to and share your experiences.

I then put together a list of stands I wanted to visit, which primarily consisted of vendors involved with Fibre to The Home networks along with solutions to upgrade existing legacy networks to RFoG and/or PON solutions. This, in conjunction with getting ideas from other VM Engineering attendees, enabled a plan of action to be followed.



**Tim Griffiths, Principal Engineer, Engineering Configuration Control, Access Engineering Serve, Virgin Media at SCTE's booth at ANGA COM**

I made extensive use of the upgraded 'Congress' entrance ticket (thanks, SCTE) to attend a number of the presentations which formed part of the congress programme. There was an informative DOCSIS 3.1 discussion, 'New Challenges for HFC Networks' event, a 'QoS and Protection of Content/Privacy' presentation and very informative UHDTV and TV Cloud service lectures. There were many more but, in the interests of time, I chose lectures of interest to me, concentrating on new networks and services.

I found the whole event very informative, made a number of new connections, met a number of existing contacts (some not seen since the main cable build during the 1990s) and would highly recommend a visit to anyone with an interest in new build and upgrading legacy or obsolete networks. As the VM Engineering team is now heavily involved with new network technologies, I would be very keen to go again at some point in the not too distant future to develop my understanding and contacts with the industry.

## Keith Holland

**Principal Engineer, Virgin Media**

It was great to get the opportunity to attend ANGA COM this year. It was my second year in attendance and this time I organised meetings before the event. I head the test equipment team for Virgin Media under Amelia Mansell. ANGA COM provided a great opportunity for me to meet with other LGI affiliates and test equipment manufacturers.



I had first meetings with a few new vendors this time, including Kathrein - looking at amplifier connectivity via smart devices for our network engineers and its range of network meters (STNBV). I am happy to report that its 8-way switch has just passed Type Approval so we will be using this as part of our head-end maintenance process, KWS and others.

I had meetings with Technetix and Teleste over amplifier connectivity. Comsonics showed me its new M3 egress meter and Arcom was able to give me an overview of its new egress equipment. I was interested to see JDSU (now VIAVI) and Greenlee solutions to Wi-Fi testing in the home and have subsequently had units for review from both parties.



JDSU was able to give me information on its ONX and Optical products including data capture for compliance. I had discussions with Witbee and Kronback showed me its new

meter and VeEX gave me an in-depth update on roadmaps. It was another great ANGACOM show in 2015 and I hope to attend again in 2016.

## Danny Gaïtens

### Configuration Control Manager, Virgin Media

Firstly, I'd like to thank the SCTE for the bursary provided to attend this year's ANGACOM exhibition in Cologne. This continued support from the SCTE gives everyone a chance to benefit from the show and build relationships with some of the industry's key players. From a social point of view, the location in Cologne is fantastic and really adds to the overall experience.

This was my third time at the exhibition and it never disappoints and seems to get better and better each year. This year, however, allowed me to spend quality time with numerous vendors and colleagues to discuss in detail two key areas that I'm involved with at Virgin Media – namely, DOCSIS 3.1 – Impact Assessment/HFC Readiness and FTTx Technology (RFoG/GPON/EPON).

I managed to gain further understanding of the introduction of the DOCSIS 3.1 standard. This will change the way that

providers deliver broadband over HFC in the coming years so the impact has to be understood both from a technical and financial viewpoint. The exhibition allowed me to discuss this in detail and I managed to speak with a number of vendors to see how their new DOCSIS 3.1-capable equipment was progressing and see how that may impact Virgin Media.

In terms of FTTx, having the ability to speak with subject matter experts for each part of the solution from Civils, Cabling and Equipment to Monitoring and Tooling is a massive advantage and allows decisions to be made more quickly but also, more importantly, to make decisions based upon a better understanding.

Overall, the exhibition was first class and I'm glad I was given the opportunity to attend once again. It's fantastic to share quality time with like-minded individuals, discuss the future of our industry and, ultimately, provide world class services to our customers.

## Ben Barratt-Davis

### Core Transmission Engineering & Planning, Virgin Media

From fresh eyes, the ANGACOM experience is best described as eye-opening. You can read papers, articles, reviews and speak to colleagues but the only way to get a real feel for the direction the industry is taking, on an international scale, is to attend an event like ANGACOM.



With more than 130 speakers and presenters and 450 exhibitors from 34 countries, there was plenty of choice from Day One. The opening discussion was a good place to start, once I got used to the translation radios. The probing

questions from moderator, Werner Lauff, to Mike Fries (CEO, LGI) and Dr. Manuel Cubero (CEO, Kabel Deutschland Holding AG / Director Consumer Fixed and Cable, Vodafone Deutschland), in particular, were exactly the sort of questions I was hoping to hear.

After the opening discussions, there was a constant choice between Strategy Panels, Technology Panels and Speakers' Corner or actually meeting some exhibitors. Quite a few times, I was grateful to be able to circle back to the SCTE stand, regroup and get some advice from more experienced members on trade show experiences so far.

I was able to take away a lot of industry insight from just a few days. A lot of questions on 'how' new technology works were answered along with 'who' can supply it. This, in itself, was hugely valuable and was a great take-away from the event.

**I was able to take away a lot of industry insight from just a few days.**

The cultural experience was yet another great opportunity. The pork-knuckle challenge, a cruise on the Rhine and the Bavarian/Irish halls were just some of the highlights, although a special mention has to go to the Cologne Cathedral 'Hohe Domkirche St. Petrus' which provided the perfect alarm clock and inspirational site each morning.

Overall, an inspiring experience for which I cannot thank the SCTE enough – my thanks for awarding me the bursary and providing great hospitality and companionship throughout. I would also like to express appreciation to the organisers, exhibitors and fellow visitors who were all just as passionate and generated a real buzz, in particular some of the folk from JDSU, Ciena and Technetix.

## IBC in Amsterdam



## Adnan Grajcevc

### Implementation Engineer, IPKO Telecommunications

My name is Adnan Grajcevc and I have been working for the last eight years at IPKO Telecommunications as an implementation engineer in HFC and mobile networks. IPKO is a Slovenian broadband and mobile provider operating in Kosovo. Our broadband network is based on DOCSIS 3.0 and we look forward to upgrading our HFC network to be competitive and up to date with the latest broadband developments. This year, I had the chance to visit IBC 2015 as a bursary winner chosen by the SCTE.



For me, as a young engineer eager to learn and develop my professional and academic career, this kind of conference and exhibition is more than welcome. I have been working for almost eight years in HFC and mobile networks and sometimes I think I am a real professional but, when I have chance to attend these conferences and exhibitions and see the latest developments in broadband technology and rapid advances in broadband technology, I sometimes feel that I am still a beginner in this technology.

Being part of IBC brought a lot of benefits to me as a young broadband engineer and for my company as a broadband operator. I was very excited to see the latest product and solutions from well-known brands. IBC is considered to be one of the biggest broadband exhibitions in the world, where you have the chance to meet global broadband experts and vendors. This show, with fourteen halls and a conference area, was very hard for me to cover in a few days to see what was going on. There was so much to see and learn.

It is interesting to see how IP-based technologies are opening new possibilities for broadcasters and how IP can help customers to create and distribute their content on a range of platforms. It was impressive to visit the Future section where I had the opportunity to see 8K resolution and 3D sound offered by various Asian companies.

You can never get enough of this show – there is so much to see and learn. A big thank you to the SCTE team who were really helpful and caring. Thank you Beverly and Sara for everything and I hope to see you at the next show!



“ I was very excited to see the latest product and solutions from well-known brands. ”

**Natalia Awodeji**  
Graduate Programme,  
Virgin Media

This year I was one of the lucky winners to receive a bursary from the SCTE that allowed me to travel to Amsterdam and attend the annual IBC Conference and Exhibition. The bursary covered travel, accommodation and access to the IBC including the conferences. The conference pass is a great privilege as a lot of people attend the exhibition, but fewer visitors have access to the speakers during these sessions.



I was awed by the scale of the conference. Exhibitions were in fourteen huge halls - these required a map and good orientation skills, unless you were willing to get lost. The IBC has significantly grown and, this year, there were around 1800 exhibitors, 250 top level speakers and around 55000 visitors. On top of these numbers, visitors could enjoy a hackfest and a really popular section - the drone zone. The amount to see, discover and learn was overwhelming. I have met people from all around the world, talked to numerous vendors showcasing their latest products and listened to people that are behind leading innovations.

I love PIXAR, and one of my favourite sessions was “Vision from PIXAR and ILM”, where the creators of Inside Out and Tomorrowland discussed the challenges of releasing movies in HDR (High Dynamic Range) format. This new technology allows the audience to see colours they haven't seen before.

This was then followed by the Big Screen Experience during two nights which gave me a chance to enjoy two screenings during IBC. I am a movie fan so this was a great opportunity. The IBC Big Screen Experience not only showcased two full length movies (Fantastic Four and Inside Out), but also

coupled it with Dolby Atmos and Christie 6p laser projection system to provide the best experience currently available.

The experience of attending an exhibition such as IBC is amazing. Throughout my stay, I had a chance to meet a wide range of people. One minute you are having a chat with some sales representatives of a company, the next you are talking to the CEO...

The bursary allowed me to attend a conference I wouldn't have been able to attend otherwise. This was a great benefit to me, because I meet numerous vendors for Virgin Media, network with representatives and experience cutting edge technology in the broadcast industry at first hand.

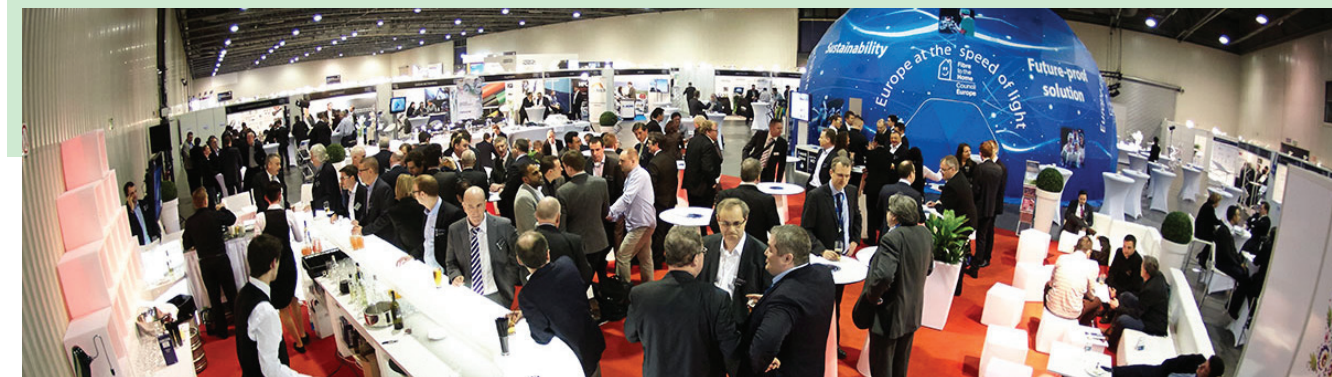
The SCTE has been amazing throughout my stay, giving me tips on what to see and attend. My stay was secured at a hotel near the RAI, where the exhibition was held. It was only a short tram ride from the city and, since an IBC pass also includes a free tram pass, I was free to discover Amsterdam. I haven't visited Amsterdam in a while so I was looking forward to seeing the city again. With the IBC spread across so many halls and a big city to discover, I am just glad that I wore my comfortable walking shoes.

I am a member of the SCTE and it is a great organisation. I frequently attend its lectures on interesting and relevant topics to the broadband industry. I appreciated the opportunity the SCTE gave me to attend IBC. Without it, I would have never made it to an event like IBC. I am a current graduate at Virgin Media and worked within TV Engineering, which made the IBC conference very relevant for me.

I spent my time networking with people from all over the world, learning about new technologies and trends in the industry, but also enjoying some great food. Was it exhaustive? Absolutely, but one of the best experiences I have had - after all, no-one can deny the glamour of the broadcast industry.

“ The amount to see, discover and learn was overwhelming. ”

## FTTH conference in Warsaw



**Sean Pillans**  
Senior Engineer, Field  
Engineering/Access  
Engineering, Serve,  
Virgin Media



The FTTH Conference hosted this year in Warsaw, Poland, is an annual three-day event providing the attendee with access to industry experts through workshops, lectures and exhibitors. It's a great event for networking, providing the attendee with an opportunity to meet other attendees in the industry who are like-minded and keen to learn and share their experiences relating to FTTH networks and fibre in general.

Day One is dedicated to workshops, Days Two and Three are dedicated to a structured programme of lectures and access to the exhibition stands. If you get the opportunity to attend this event, you should plan ahead and make use of the FTTH Conference website to create a personalised schedule - this will ensure that you know what's happening and when, as it gets very busy.

On Day One, the morning workshops provided detailed analysis of FTTH deployments within Europe, showing how fibre delivery is growing and how bandwidth and service reliability is driving growth in this area. The afternoon session enabled me to get more hands-on, providing an opportunity to look at FTTH training requirements, field 'fibre splicing' techniques and OTDR testing within FTTH networks.

Days Two and Three enabled access to the lectures which are provided throughout the entire event and covered a wide range of informative and practical insights into everything FTTH- and fibre-related, such as network economics, network design and fibre solutions by industry leaders who are delivering FTTH networks today.

When not at lectures, the obvious place to be was the main exhibition hall where a multitude of exhibitors provided information and advice on everything from network inventory, fibre cable and consumables to complete turnkey FTTH solutions. Here, I used my time to meet with colleagues and exhibitors to discuss FTTH strategies and ideas, as well as legacy HFC network requirements which I found a very productive use of my time. I was even able to get a few suppliers to work together to agree ideas and bottom out solutions for a planned project!

And last, but by no means least, there was also time to visit the 'World of Applications Dome' where examples of next generation services were being shown, such as doctor/patient monitoring applications and home control systems.

In summary, the FTTH conference is a very well organised, informative and collaborative event and I would highly recommend it to those interested in the design, engineering and deployment of fibre networks.



**Don't miss your chance, as an SCTE member, to apply for the FTTH conference and exhibition 2016 (Luxembourg), ANGA COM 2016 (Cologne) and IBC 2016 (Amsterdam). Please email 300 words to [office@thescte.eu](mailto:office@thescte.eu) on why you wish to be considered for the bursary.**