By the Book

Standards, Shows and Awards

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Roger has been involved in standards work since the late 1980s. Increasingly worried about the lack of MSO input into standards generation he joined the BSI Cable Committee at the beginning of the EN50083 series development, eventually taking over as its chairman. He now leads the U.K. delegation on the relevant committees at CENELEC and IEC, and participates as a technical expert on several working groups.

Just back from the ANGA show in Cologne, Germany, where the SCTE had a stand as well as chairing one of the technical sessions. A great show, with an increase in the number of exhibitors as well as visitor numbers up by 15%. In the current financial climate it generates a warm feeling to see a European event bucking the trend of recent U.S. shows. From the SCTE standpoint, as a partner in IBC, it augers well for our Amsterdam event in September; exhibitor numbers are holding up very well but the chance of maintaining or increasing visitor numbers is always pleasing.

Many of my colleagues from the IEC and CENELEC standards groups were at the show. It was good to catch up, although some of us had met only two weeks before at the TC100 TA5 meeting in Helsinki, Finland.

There's a lot happening on the European standards front this quarter; the good news is that it's mostly routine and going smoothly; the bad news is that it's not very interesting news! Most of the cable network standards are coming to the end of their respective maintenance phases and are entering their final voting stage. Included amongst these is the long awaited part 11 of IEC EN 60728, the safety standard. This is a significant departure from the previous version and includes a new treatment of the requirements for lightning and atmospheric over-voltage protection, as well as simplifying and defining what is needed for simple installs of domestic satellite dishes and aerials.

Perhaps the notable event of recent months is the publication the DVB "Blue Book" for the second-generation transport protocols for cable — DVB-C2. This has been eagerly awaited, completing the set that includes DVB-T2 and DVB-S2, the specifications for second-generation terrestrial and satellite broadcasting. There is a great description of the new features provided by DVB-C2 in the current issue of the SCTE journal *Broadband* (Volume 31, No. 1) provid-

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ed by Christoph Schaaf from Kabel Deutschland GmBH on behalf of the ReDesign group. If you need a copy it's available as a download for SCTE members on our Web site www.theSCTE.eu. If you are not a member, why not join and get all this great stuff first hand?

It is perhaps not quite the "done thing," in a column devoted to standards, to report "off the grape vine" about industry attitudes to the new DVB-C2 standard. There does seem some concern, however, that the chip-set manufacturers are a little reluctant to commit to the new standard. Without volume (cheap) chip-sets the new standard is unlikely to take off. This also is compounded by the new emerging ways of bandwidth enhancement such as node segmentation, switched digital video, as well as a possible "time window" issue, when FTTH may become the way to go. If we throw in the traditional "rental model" beloved by cable MSOs that have invested heavily in the digital changeover and now have very large numbers of DVB-C boxes in their inventory, we can perhaps see why the economic model for moving to DVB-C2 is not overwhelming.

In closing, it would be remiss of me not to mention the fabulous SCTE Gala Awards Dinner that we held this year at the House of Parliament in London. One of the rewards that should flow from training and standards observance is the acknowledgement of your efforts by your peers. Our host, Bill Olner, MP, presented the Technological Innovation award to IneoQuest for their Veriframe product; runners-up were TNO (Utopic software) and Technetix (Reverse Path Matrix Combiner). The SCTE Member of the Year award went to Steve Wells of Virgin Media and Technician of the Year to Jonathan Mitchell also from Virgin Media. In addition, the Society awarded Honorary Fellowships to two well-known and longstanding members of the industry, Mike Thornton of TA Services and Chris Eccles of Virgin Media.