

# Digital shakes up entertainment

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Created *12/06/2005 - 2:51pm*

Submitted by srlinuxx on Sunday 12th of June 2005 02:51:37 PM Filed under [Sci/Tech](#) [1]

This was the predominant theme at a conference on the future of digital content held at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London earlier this week.

Delegates heard about a world where TV and music companies would struggle to stand out in what one TV executive called "digital fog".

But the days when an entertainment giant could largely influence what people do in their spare time are over.

"TV has moved from being a fairly passive medium into this digital era," said Simon Gunning, Head of Interactive Media at Celador, the company behind Who Wants to be a Millionaire.

"Audiences expect more control and greater access to stuff," he told the In the City Interactive conference.

## More than TV

He highlighted new satellite channels which were a far cry from the traditional fare on TV, such as Fancy a Flutter, a betting channel, and Avago, an interactive games channel.

"This is leading to a change in the way we interact with our telly," said Mr Gunning.

It means that TV producers need to think beyond just making a show for broadcast. Instead they now had to look at ways of offering more through digital TV, mobiles or online.

"With big peak time monster formats you are looking at mass participation," he said.

"As devices and platforms change, ways to engage the viewer change and become essential," said Mr Gunning.

His comments were echoed by Anthony Lilley of Magic Lantern, which has been working on setting up a broadband documentary channel for Channel Four called 4Docs.

"Ideas jump across platforms and they mutate," he explained. "The experience you get is diverging not converging."

The record industry has already had to come to terms with the digital era, largely due to the rise of the popularity of file-sharing over the internet.

In just a couple of years, there has been a sea change in the attitude towards making more music available online.

"There is now an infinite choice of music and the stores are always open," said Danny VanEmden, Digital Media Director at EMI Music UK.

"The changes are unprecedented."

Next generation

The impact of digital extends to all forms of media, including traditional news organisations such as the BBC and the Financial Times.

They are operating in a world where news is everywhere and people can get their information from a multitude of sources, from established newspapers to bloggers.

"We are in the middle of a rather uncomfortable generational shift, especially in the UK," said Nigel Pocklington of the Financial Times.

"We are shifting to a generation that has not grown up reading newspapers."

"We are now dealing with online and digital worlds, where people get news from screens and mobile devices," said Mr Pocklington.

"It is a challenge to manage that transition."

The conference was part of In The City Interactive events, which focus on digital content issues.

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