



Forging Ahead: Supporting Storytelling During a Pandemic

It's no exaggeration that the content and storytelling scene has never been rocked before to this extent. Like many other sectors, things initially ground to an abrupt halt, but as Singapore slowly began to recover, the industry's spirit and "can-do" attitude came to the fore. Shows continued to be produced in a safe manner, and there was a resounding rally to forge ahead with content creation to keep the creative spirit going.

“Thank you for bringing us respite with these amazing stories, reimagined for an unprecedented time. The resilience and ingenuity demonstrated by the media industry throughout this period is a story waiting to be told, to inspire future generations of storytellers.” - Mr Lew Chuen Hong, Chief Executive, Infocomm Media Development Authority of Singapore.

With cinemas and theatres closed, the pandemic has accelerated the shift in how content is being consumed as more people have switched to viewing content on OTT streaming services. In a much-welcomed show of solidarity, the Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA) announced new initiatives and programmes to develop innovative content, nurture talent and encourage fresh opportunities for international collaboration. The announcement was made by Minister for Communications and



Information, Mr S Iswaran at the opening ceremony of the Asia TV Forum & Market (ATF) and ScreenSingapore.

A pair of global partnerships

Two new partnerships with Audible and KC Global Media Singapore were announced. Audible, one of the world's largest producers of spoken-word entertainment and audio titles, will set up a first-of-its-kind "Audible Accelerator", which will train talent in audio development and production, and identify original stories for distribution on its platform. KC Global Media Singapore will be collaborating with local media companies to conceptualise and co-develop original scripts for the regional audience.

"Technology advancement evolves the way consumers digest content and sets new market trends. Despite the challenging times amidst the recent climate, our brand thrives on pushing the boundaries of creativity and innovation." - George Chien, President & CEO of KC Global Media Asia

Overcoming the challenges, together

The Public Service Content Fund was launched earlier this year in partnership with Mediacorp, Singapore Press Holdings and Vidsee. The fund aims to grow the offerings on their digital platforms, and to that end, 78 new commissions were awarded, benefitting 67 local media companies like August Pictures, Verite Productions and Butterworks. 22 new titles have already been released in November, and there will be more released progressively as we head into 2021.

Projects that are already in production have also made strides despite the situation. Three of the eight feature films awarded at the inaugural Southeast Asia Co-Production Grant (SCPG) in 2019 are currently in post-production, and the remaining five are scheduled to start filming early next year. Support for these "made-with-Singapore" projects are continuing, and six more film projects from the region were awarded after another round of proposals in August this year. Of note is that these films will involve cross-border collaboration between first-time feature directors and more seasoned veterans in both Singapore and Southeast Asian countries.

Taking it to the next level

This year's partner lineup has a couple of new additions to reflect gaming's and e-sport's increasingly popular role in the creation of content, entertainment and storytelling. gamescom asia launched its Singapore Games Market Bootcamp, a hybrid event where viewers across the globe tuned in to learn about the region's ever-expanding userbase and gain insights into the business aspects of the industry.



SINGAPORE
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Vidcon Asia also celebrates its first-ever edition. The Asian leg of the world's largest gathering of online video and digital creators takes place on 3 December, and includes speakers and media players like Patrick Starr, Mr Kate, and Wengie, as well as a special live appearance from kuki.bot, the world's first synthetic AI transhuman and of course, her creators.

As consumers are exposed to more content and becoming more discerning, there is a demand for quality content that is both diverse and authentic. That is why, no matter how the pandemic situation pans out in the months ahead, it is important that we keep our momentum and world-class approach to supporting the industry and talent.