

ISDCF Main Meeting Notes – May 14, 2025
In person at Universal and Zoom

ISDCF Sponsoring Companies



2024 Sponsoring Companies: AMC, Christie, Barco, Deluxe, Dolby, EIKON, GDC Technologies, Harkins Theatres, Marcus Theatres, Paramount, Pixelogic, Qube, Samsung/Harman, Sharp/NEC, Sony Pictures, Texas Instruments, Universal Pictures, Village Cinemas Australia, Walt Disney Pictures, Warner Bros., Xperi/DTS

Upcoming Meetings

Wednesday July 2, 2025 10am Zoom only

Wednesday August 20, 2025 10am In Person / Zoom / Universal?

Part 1: General Reporting

Housekeeping:

- Zoom meeting (provided by ISDCF)

- Set next meeting dates (above).
- Thank you ISDCF for support of the Chairman.
- Thank you to Dean Bullock for providing general expenses and admin support.
- Meeting notes from January 16, 2025 approved and to post to open website
- Legal reminder / press reminder / Antitrust Disclaimer. The official antitrust guidelines are posted on our website and are linked from the main ISDCF page. A short verbal overview of guidelines was given. Please no social media for discussions held at ISDCF.

Organizational Issues:

Membership invoices for individuals have been sent

Probably in July we will purge those that are not members (individuals and corporations).

InterSociety Board:

President: Steve LLamb

VP: Reiner Doetzkies

Secretary / Treasurer: Dean Bullock

Executive Director: Jerry Pierce - and chairman ISDCF

Bookkeeper: Michelle Hurst

Members: Susie Beiersdorf, Mark Collins, Sean Romano, Mark Waterston, Kirk Griffins, Mike Radford

InterSociety financial status: We now have a bookkeeper. We have about 90% of the necessary sponsorship needed to remain at the same level of operations. We are short about \$10K out of \$80K needed. The board is monitoring this closely.

ISDCF LinkedIn account has been more active. We encourage participation and cross promotion.

The audio for this meeting was (again) horrible. My sincere apologies for those that suffered through it. We will get better microphones for next in-person meeting.

Attendance is at end of these notes.

Action Items from May 14, 2025

1. Consider a virtual conference/webinar on special topics. Could start building a library of educational material for training (on specs). 45 minutes on a topic.
2. Post ISDCF audio test material
3. Brian will lead the group to create expectations on the [Google Doc](#).
4. Try to schedule demo at Amazon of the audio test material (August 20 ISDCF meeting?) Possible hold ISDCF meeting close to that location. (Bill will check)
5. Create BYOD subcommittee to propose novel methods for in-theater delivery of captions/audio/sign language to personal devices
6. Find history of devices from Georgia Tech on in-theater delivery. Reach out to ETC for a project on BYOD open domain solutions.
7. Present at SMPTE Fall Conference (maybe audio test content - Steve)

===

Box Office has been good so far this year!

===

Cinema Systems Summit 2025

ICTA/ISDCF/Intersociety held first conference!

Feedback: Well attended. Good feedback and more relevant than other similar conferences. Need more breaks. Less talking heads, more sessions. Hope that we do again next year.

Financial was NOT good. We (ICTA) lost money on the event. ISDCF does not have financial resources to assist.

Would it be possible to charge for the event? We think CinemaCon should help more next year. We may need to charge for lunch. OR skip lunch.

Any feedback from exhibition folks? Not that we know of...

There was consideration on training technicians for some of the details of SMPTE specs (and other standards) - and why. It might be a possible new session for a future session - or possibly a stand alone session. Training is always good. But how do we make contact with the right people? Probably not at CinemaCon. Maybe a "virtual" training.

Technician education: about an hour, maybe two topics. Direct “you can use it tomorrow” topics. To get it start it: Pick a topic, find panelists, announce it/publish it. Maybe getting ready for Avatar?

===

Avatar 3 - Fire and Ash - What are Specs?

A major area of concern that was identified at the Summit was a request from exhibition for more details on the specs. 48/4K/3D is a possibility. Disney has been asking exhibition for information on theater capabilities. Old Avatar 2 test content has been available from Deluxe (but no info on who can get it).

===

Audio Test Material

The content has not yet been posted. We created a [Google Doc](#) for people to describe what you should hear/how to analyze the test content. This was posted after last meeting and we have not had any comments/updates.

Plan to create an small group to create these comments. Brian Vessa volunteered to work on the descriptions / expectations.

The content needs to be posted. Steve/Sean are working on getting this done.

Amazon has offered to demonstrate this test content in more Standard/LED screens. Maybe aim for August 20 meeting date.

===

BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) updates

Meetings have continued with understanding the next steps for BYOD aka ISCAF efforts.

We are heading down two paths: one to help in “standardization” of specifications and creating material for current caption/audio smart phone apps. The second path is to improve the design of systems to meet all the goals of devices for the application.

Path one: Products are being deployed and need to have structure for getting content, security issues, the approval process. There is a need to create methods of making these systems work within the ecosystem of the industry. Main focus of ISCAF subcommittee.

Path two: The current systems are not good enough for the long term. They can't provide the functionality for all needs of the users - like providing captioning for trailers and all content in the playlist. (That requires pre-loading of content.) They do not seem to provide frame accurate HI playback. They have issues with getting content prior to arriving at theater.

What is the best path forward?

One studio person felt that the current BYOD systems being deployed are not sustainable due to the number of different requirements for each system. The "old" system that was attached to cinema servers and used IR/WiFi to devices was a framework for a much better (and supportable) solution. Isn't there a way to extend this for a wider set of BYOD devices?

Reinforced by others in the discussion for a better unified in-theater distribution and timing. Someone needs to set standards like DCI did to bring together all the "interop" systems prior to the Standard.

What is the specific set of security requirements for delivery of these assets (HI, VI, captions, alternate languages)? By default studios are releasing content to current BYOD ecosystems TODAY. There are a wide variety of informally stated security requirements, some of which are being ignored to provide the business need for these BYOD systems and patrons.

There has been a group formed - ISCAF (InterSociety for Cinema Accessibility Forum) with leadership from Howard Kiedaisch (DCDC) who has held a few meetings on the topic, mainly focusing on Path 1 - which is addressing the most problems today.

There was a proposal that we encourage the ISCAF group to continue and work Path 1 to solve the current deployed systems AND create a second group to address/invent/propose a new system that would meet future needs - following Path 2 - it would be based on in-theater broadcast of all content to personal devices.

The ISDCF group should focus on: systems that broadcast content within the theater to personal devices. Broadcast with IR/ Bluetooth / WiFi or other that can be received by unmodified personal devices (smart phones). The broadcast must contain: multiple audio tracks (probably encrypted), multiple subtitle tracks (probably encrypted) and some type of video track for sign language. It was pointed out that one commercial company is selling a system that might meet these requirements (Qube).

One comment for specifics of such an open “standard” for in-theater broadcast: 1) IR and Bluetooth can not support video streaming, therefore most likely a WiFi solution is needed. 2) The issue of screen identification can be done with a bluetooth beacon, ultrasonic beacon or a QR code. 3) The broadcast protocol should be publicly available - either be a standard or an RDD for anyone to use.

An exhibitor stated they have moved to using a current “smart phone” based ADA solution (Dolby) and patrons are happy with this solution. It does require dedicated modified smart phones (not BYOD) and it requires a secure WiFi access point in each theater. There is always issues of keeping staff aware of use of the devices.

Could this be a project for a University Graduate level class? Something like a USC / UCLA? Maybe the ETC at USC could help solve this problem? Goal of a public domain solution. Georgia Tech did something like this 10 years ago. <https://leader.pubs.asha.org/doi/full/10.1044/leader.FTR5.15022010.5>

A concern was expressed that we should not be re-negotiating the ADA cinema requirements. We need to be careful to address the needs of patrons that want to use their personal devices for captions (current language and alternative languages) and audio (descriptive audio, enhanced dialogue and alternative language) with possible sign language support, but NOT as a replacement for ADA requirements. IF sometime in the future these solutions might meet the ADA requirements, that would be up to coordination between MPA / Cinema United and the government for policy discussions on mandated devices and requirements.

An exhibitor express desire to find good solutions for BYOD that could be used to reduce the ADA mandate of the number of cinema provided devices. If BYOD solutions (either current deployed devices or path 2 future devices) could be shown to reduce the demand on theater provided solutions, then these efforts would be a success.

===

On Screen Text Rendering

Dean is to form a committee to have the discussion for a long term solution / requirements for moving forward.

SMPTE has a ballot in-process for a work-around for Japanese Subtitles. It is not a long term solution.

No work has been done on this topic.

===

Global SMPTE Roll out

Many in Asia are still using InteropDCP. Korea/Thailand - No update this time.

===

Image Artifact issues (playback issues)

No update for ISDCF, keep on list. There are meetings held by some that “talk about this problem” often. It won’t solve the problem, but it means that ISDCF doesn’t need to start a new effort. Some movement is happening.

===

End-of-Life Playback issues

We recognize that at some point in time individual studio may say that at sometime certain end-of-life devices won’t receive content. There is a desire that exhibition be given an 18 month head’s up. There has been unsupported equipment internationally.

Certs still expiring and they are referred to ISDCF Cert page (<https://www.isdcf.com/certs-expiring/>)

===

D-Box Update

There was a short discussion on changes to the D-Box motion seat system. There was observation that D-Box is connected to the internet and may use audio correlation for syncing the motion so they no longer require an embedded audio track for their playback. This was a discussion without D-Box and just observation and is not official information.

===

Website and IT updates Naming Convention

All good. Business as usual.

Question if we should verify the email entry? Answer: no.

===

DCI Update

DCI made a few changes to the CTP that was released.

Moved to CTP 1.4+ Fresh start for new equipment.

Asking for feedback on terminology on documents. Making sure since first published 15-20 years ago that it uses the right terminology now.

===

SMPTE update

DP vote on empty timed text

Study group on Digital cinema history underway

Maybe present something from ISDCF at the SMPTE Fall Conference

===

EDCF Update

Guillaume Branders - Executive Director of the EDCF

Desire to do more coordination between ISDCF and EDCF

===

Topics from CinemaCon

We talked about a few topics that was suggested based on CinemaCon meetings. Mainly for small theaters and ways to better sharing social media content, ways to help share showtimes with Google / search engines and better use of internet connection in theaters.

After a brief discussion, the group felt these topics are more business issues and not

suitable for ISDCF discussion.

===

InterSociety Newsletter

We decided to open participation to members of ISDCF to be on the Newsletter committee.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN HELPING WITH THIS ACTIVITY, PLEASE RESPOND TO JERRY!!

The outline is tentatively:

- 1) Intro / Motivation for this newsletter
- 2) Overview of Cinema System Summit
- 3) Where-are-they-now? A brief update on an alphabet soup of organizations in the Cinema Space: (The names in () is who signed up to gather information.)

- ISDCF (Jerry/Steve)
- InterSociety (Jerry/Steve)
- ICTA
- Cinema United (Mark W)
- DCI (Steve)
- SMPTE
- Cinema Foundation
- MPA/TPN (Mark W)
- ASC (Jerry)
- MoveLabs
- HPA
- ETC

- 4) Some brief updates on companies that are members of InterSociety (a pay-to-play benefit for InterSociety)

(Do you want your company to be here?)

===

Our goal for each organization is to ask:

What is the Mission of the organization?
What are current activities around Cinema Presentation?
What are future plans? (6-12 months out)
What would you like others to know about your group?
And any gossip you would like to share?
Finally, anything InterSociety could help advance?

We would ask members of the committee to be responsible for one or more of the organizations to get the information for the newsletter.

===

Vendor Updates

Action Items from March 27, 2025

1. Post the DCP for the ISDCF Audio Test content Version 2 for distribution
2. On a re-encode for version 3 of the test content, lower the “claps” and other segments (not the piano/Patriot) by at least 3db
3. Write up an expectation [Google document](#) that explains each of the segments of the test content.
4. Start a small group to add to the audio test content expectation document.
5. Hold a discussion to formalize the workflow for naming convention physical addresses.
6. Provide feedback to SMPTE on the posted journal articles.

===

Attendance on last page.