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**1st MEDIA ARCHITECT OF THE
FUTURE AWARD:**

ROMA KHANNA, MGM

Saturday 31 March 2012

17.00 – 17.30



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Anne de Kerckhove

On behalf of my entire team at Reed Midem, I'm really delighted to welcome you to MIPCube's inaugural architect of the future award and visionary talk. We created this award to celebrate and honour an industry figure who's helped define the new global TV landscape, who's embraced innovation and creativity to take this super media to the next level. And it was really important to us to find somebody that really embodied all those values and that had embodied them throughout their career and I'm really absolutely delighted to honour Roma Khanna, president of the Television Group and Digital for MGM studios. It's also fantastic for me personally to be giving an award to a fellow Canadian, it seems like we've invaded the whole MIPCube and I promise that was not a plan, and to pioneering women. Throughout her career, Roma has always been an innovator in the entertainment space. After leaving Sony Music in 1999, she cofounded Snap Media and Snap Media actually became a leading interactive digital media company that was one of the first companies to produce original content for global social networking sites for teens, Degraasi TV. Now this was in 1999, way before Facebook was ever even created, probably almost a decade before, so Roma was ahead of her times. And then Roma joined Chum in 2003 as VP of interactive and in 2007, she joined NBC Universal as president of international and digital and in fact, those are two core values of MIPCube; international and digital, they're the core forces that come together. If you look at how many countries are represented here today, that's really what this award also embodies, somebody who's had an impact on understanding the global landscape of TV and the global changes in the ecosystem. In June 2011, Roma joined MGM with a mandate to grow the TV business internationally, develop new, original content and expand the digital initiatives. We are incredibly privileged to have Roma with us today and now I'd like to invite her on stage to receive her award and then, more importantly, to hear about her vision of the future.

And Roma is now being given the trophy. That was actually created for Roma, so this is a unique piece of work that we created for you and the spirit of the award.

Roma Khanna

Thank you and thank you so much for this amazing honour, I am very touched and delighted that they chose me to be the first recipient of this award, and my mother says thank you. Of course, when they invited me to come here today, they asked me also to give a visionary talk...

about the future of television, but then I thought you know what? I've been in this business doing digital media and digital entertainment for over 13 years now, and I think in internet years, that's kind of like dog years, so I've been doing it for about 130 years, so maybe I've got something to say.

In preparing I actually went back and thought about the first time I did a talk that was entitled The Future of Television. It turns out it was in 1999, some friends here were probably in the room at the time and I talked about how television was changing, but how there were guiding principles, that if we could stick to those guiding principles we'd always make great television and we'd always succeed. So I went back and I looked at that list thinking I can update it, and it turns out I can save myself a lot of time, because the list as it happens is exactly the same. The guiding principles remain the same, even though the context of those principles change. I'm going to take you through the six principles I think you need to keep in mind as television evolves, and succeeding in the world of television. First, what is television? I thought I'd go back to the dictionary definition; this is over 100 years old. It comes from two words; tele, which means at a distance; and vision, which could mean anything from sight to mystical or religious experience, something extraordinarily beautiful, something that comes into your mind, visions of grandeur. It's putting these two things together where you get the word television in a 1907 definition. Nowhere in here of course, does it mention technology, waves, boxes, wires, nothing like that. Over 100 years ago, television was about vision at a distance.

How do we make vision at a distance work? The first thing is to keep in mind that television is not a device, but rather an experience and an experience I think, that largely takes place in the hearts and minds of the people on the other end of the storytelling.

So here are the six things that I try to keep in mind as I think about television in the last ten years and in the next ten years. The first, and this is revolutionary, you might not have heard this before. Content. Content is king. I think that was true in the last 50 years of television and that will remain true for the next 50 years of television. It is about the content, it's about that experience, it's about the storytelling, it's what matters at the end of the day. Everything else changes, but that experience is what keeps us coming back for more. Of course, in saying that there's a couple of things that I always like to add, which is quality matters. Just because...

Roma Khanna

everyone can make television, doesn't mean they do it well. As with any storytelling, we all have the tools, but the quality is going to be an important part of the story. Think about the cat playing the piano on YouTube, well that might be very, very entertaining for a long period of time, over and over again, but at some point you're going to stop and it's probably not going to be two hours and ten minutes later, it'll be a shorter period of time. Compare that to the next James Bond film or the last two James Bond films, where you might be able to watch those over and over again over a lifetime. Quality does matter.

But of course, quality is relative. Charlie Bit My Finger; that was really funny, it's still funny. It's not quite James Bond, but it did what it meant to do, so the context of that experience is relative to the way you're experiencing it. If you paid 20 dollars to see Charlie Bit My Finger in a movie theatre, you might feel a little bit let down; chances are for a great feature film, you won't. But, the important thing to remember is there's room for everything, it's contextual, it's about the medium. Happy Tree Friends, Funny or Die, Epic Rat Battles. These are all great pieces of content for the internet, for your internet connected device, for your iPad, for your television, if that's where you're watching it, but it's a moment in time. It's not the same as a television show like Stargate, or Dead Like Me, or Fame, or 21 Jump Street, the new feature film; it's not the same - it's different, but there's room for all of it. It is not an evolution that moves from one to the other, it's an evolution that just gets bigger and wider. So, content remains king, but content gets a lot more exciting.

Second principle; and we talked about this one a lot over ten years ago. Distribution. Distribution is not all that matters, it is fundamentally important if you can't get the content then you're not going to have that wonderful experience, but it's not the distribution method that defines the experience. It's not all that matters. In fact, much like technology - it's the thing that should disappear into the background and that you completely forget about. It used to be that it was about gate-keepers. Distribution, you can get on my platform, you cannot get on my platform. If you're not on my platform, then nobody's going to see you, that is not the way that the world works anymore. In fact, gate-keeping has evolved, not only in the television world with Cable and Satellite providers moving into more and more over the top services, but just in general; this whole concept the audience has demanded that gate keeping is not acceptable...

Roma Khanna

because it's about choice. And it's about taking away choice. Our audiences today expect choice, they demand choice and if they are not getting choice and better than that, control over those choices, then they're not happy. When they're not happy, they're not coming to you and you don't have an audience and everything falls apart. This was true ten years ago as it is today. Some of you might remember a company called Prodigy. In the late 90s, Prodigy launched as a competitor to AOL, but their unique selling proposition was that it was a family friendly Internet Service Provider. Don't you worry, we'll bring you the internet, but we won't bring you any of that bad stuff. Well, where's Prodigy today? It couldn't do it. Not only could it not do it, and it had lawsuits to demonstrate that that wasn't possible, nobody wanted them to do it. AOL won as a result in that particular day. You can't control your audience, you can't control their choices. You can't tell them what they want, you can't tell them how to get it, you can't tell them where to get it. It doesn't work. When you look at who's successful today, YouTube, Wikipedia, Facebook, Twitter. This is all about putting the control in the hands of the audience, this is all about ultimately cloud driven technology where everything you access through these sites you're going to be able to get anywhere, any time you want it, in any way that you want it. It might be your iPad, it might be your Android phone, it might be telepathy ten years from now, I don't know. But you're going to have that choice and you're going to have access to it. When we try to control that, the audience kicks back. If you want to control something, you have to give them something else in return, otherwise it doesn't work.

It only works for these guys, I'm not sure exactly why, but I think it's because they've evolved from being a gate-keeper who says actually, you can't take our content anywhere else, unlike all the other platforms into something else. They've turned into a taste maker, and this is the evolution of what it means to give distribution to the hands of your audience. We'll give you everything, but you know what? Everything's a lot, so now we turn as audience members to taste makers and say well, Rotten Tomatoes, what should I watch? Or friend on Twitter, what should I watch? Friend on Facebook, what should I watch? Apple, how should I consume my content? Well, they're going to tell you, because they're a taste maker and they're someone you trust, so it's about that editorial voice. It's no longer about controlling the environment and controlling the level of choice, but it's about navigating through it and being a voice, it's about being the voice in any moment of time that your audience might want to listen to. I think...

Roma Khanna

that's where the trade off happens with the audience, that's why people accept that they can't take their iTunes songs somewhere else, because Apple's not a gate-keeper, it's a taste maker and it's giving them something and it's making a trade.

It's very important to value that audience as we think about our content, these are the things that are at the core of our minds as producers, as a television studio; the audience is always right – well, sometimes. And that's the other thing when I think about content that we forget about; sometimes we give so much control back we forget there has to be room for surprises. There is a role of a storyteller, there is a role of a game creator, of a world imaginer who's not you. If someone had asked me six months ago, perhaps even three months ago or three weeks ago, whether I wanted a game on my iPad that involved drawing pictures for friends of mine in another city in a Pictionary meets Hangman sort of style, I would have said no. Been there, done that, seen it, I don't need it. Well this morning at five when I got up in London to fly here, I was on Draw Something, which I spent 99 cents for and that's the not free version; it surprised me. It surprised me the last episode of Game of Thrones. The Crying Game surprised me. If you had taken an audience vote, you wouldn't have got there, it would never have happened. The audience isn't always right and the audience sometimes will trade being right and trade being in control for a surprise. So surprises are important.

As we think about all of that, I get to my third principle which is, when all those things happened and surprised me, I got in touch with somebody else. I tweeted about it, Facebooked it, I put it in my update, I called a friend and said download Draw Something because I need someone to play with in a different time zone, everyone else is asleep. You need somebody else, because we are socially networked; we are social beings, it is in our core, it has always been in our core. Ten years ago it wasn't Facebook and it wasn't Twitter, but it was the water cooler, we referred to water cooler television. Seinfeld was a water cooler television show, what did that mean? That meant when you watched it you wanted to talk about it. You wanted to share that experience with someone else, you wanted to repeat those jokes and say more and more. It's like Saturday Night Live, it got funnier the more you told the story to your friends, more so than in the moment. It's about adding that sharing aspect into things, and this is where interactivity comes in when we talk about interactive content and how we make television more...



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Roma Khanna

interactive and more social. How do we take advantage of this inherent human nature where we want to share things, and that's such an important part of what we do now. But there's one caveat and that is not everything needs to be interactive. And I think this happens all the time in the world of production. People say that's a great TV show idea, let me tell you the web, Facebook, Twitter integration I've got for it. But it's a romantic comedy. There's a difference between marketing and immersing someone in a story; they're both valuable and they're both important and they both have to be digital and on multiple platforms today, but they are not necessarily the same thing.

I've got the example of The Hunger Games. Phenomenal worldwide box office, they're opening week and a lot of it attributed to the social campaign that they built up beforehand. This made sense. The fans of The Hunger Games wanted to create an ID for the city of Panem, they wanted to get a piece of a puzzle on Twitter and try to put it together with other people to figure out something new about what was going to happen in the movie. It made sense for the audience, it made sense for the content, it was more than just marketing, it was an immersive story experience putting you in the world of Panem in The Hunger Games. What if we tried that with the Vow? Another global phenomenon in terms of a movie about a woman who loses her memory and has to fall in love with her husband all over again. I'm not sure what the interactive application would look like, maybe it would wipe out your hard drive and you'd have to then try to figure out how to find everything and bring it back. It doesn't mean we wouldn't market it online, but not everything and not every story makes sense interactively. If you think about what really works in television, it's often non-scripted, because it's timely. It's Top Chef, it's reality programming, it's what's happening now, it's sports, it's things that can immerse you in the moment. The longer builds, the slower builds require worlds and audiences that are up for it.

It also requires technology that is up for it, this is the fourth principle. Technology, despite everything I said, does matter. It inspires us. Siri asks what she can help us with, maybe she can tell us a story, maybe she can tell us something else but this is the important thing - she is transparent. She is not a piece of technology, she's a she. She's a person, she's someone you're talking to and someone you're interacting with and she has become the thing that hides

the technology, a powerful search engine technology is as simple as something called Siri, someone called Siri who can help when you ask her to. So technology, as it inspires us has to work, it has to be transparent, it has to be something that we don't notice. It fades into the background, and other than the geeks among us who think this is really cool, I love this device. That should fade and it should just be that thing you turn to without thinking any more, it needs to be transparent and it needs to have a user interface that's easy. Again, Apple. It's a trade off, right? They take away some of your control, but they give you something more beautiful back and you accept that trade off because the user interface is seamless. It's better than Minority Report, it's better than Star Trek, it's the next generation of facial recognition EPGs of augmented reality through your mobile phone.

Technology matters, but it matters the most when you don't know that it's there and you don't think about it working. You don't think about the fact that you're all capable of accessing the internet in this moment, in this second; whereas in 1999 we weren't able to do that. Because technology also has to happen in its time, to get to that moment of transparency, I think you have to have critical mass, you have to have enough people using it. You have to have enough people connecting and sharing, because that's our human nature and if you're before your time, no matter how good you are, it's not going to work. Den.net, Pop.com. If you're as old as I am and have been in this industry you recognise those names. 15 million dollar launch party, but they're gone. They were making original content, they were telling stories, video based stories but here's the key; nobody had video on their computers. There were ten of us, people were still using dial-ups, there was no such thing as ubiquitous broadband. Technology has to come in its time. Facebook wouldn't have worked in the same way if it had launched 15 years earlier. So it matters. It matters about when you think about 3D, people come in and pitch great 3D television ideas. It's not time yet. It will be, so it's going to matter. It's like HD, we talked about it and now it's here; it will come, but it will be led by the things that are inherent to its core values the most, probably sports, probably nature documentaries, the things that really blow you away. Feature films, like Avatar are going to drive 3D, not the Vow. You don't need to see that in 3D, it doesn't make the story any better today. It will and it will come, but technology in its time. We will be talking about it for longer than we think with a lot of these new technologies.

Roma Khanna

Number five. This one is the difference between having a hobby and having a day job. Business models matter. We have to find ways to make it work, it can't all be advertising money, that's too much pressure on the advertisers, but it will be largely that; but micropayments. I go back to Draw Something, I paid 99 cents because I wanted the colour brown, it was really hard to do the trees without brown, so I paid for it. I went and got it and I'm willing to make those micropayments. A friend of mine said to me, the friend who's responsible for my addiction to Draw Something, said I think I've had 20 dollars worth of fun. I asked how much he'd paid and he said nothing, I'm using the free version, but I've had 20 dollars worth of fun, which I thought was really interesting. What he was really saying was he would have paid 20 dollars if he'd known then how much fun it was. He would have paid a movie ticket so the business models can evolve as we think about this and they will evolve.

That leads into my last important point, which is it's not just how we communicate and the distribution, it is the content. Content is the king, we begin and we end with that, and great content is not free. Unless the creator wants it to be, because it's about choice and because it's about sharing. But we have to value these things, we have to believe that it's worth just as much to get the game, to get the show, to get the video as it is to get the connection. Or we're all going to be waiting tables and making Draw Something in our spare time. But at the end of the day, it all comes back to content is king. In ten years from now if I'm kindly asked back, that's going to be my first slide again and if we can stick to that, television will live forever, so we still will be talking about it. Thank you.

Anne de Kerckhove

Thank you so much. First of all, you've obviously taken a big role in June 2011, tell us a bit about your overall TV strategy both on the programming side and the production and the distribution, although distribution is not all that matters, tell us about that overall strategy that's driving the new era for MGM.

Roma Khanna

I oversee the television studio in our digital business and distribution does matter, our distribution team's here, it matters a lot, that's why they're here at MIPTV. But it's not...

Roma Khanna

everything, because if they don't have product they've got nothing to do, so really our strategy is being driven by that. It's about taking a library of content, a great historical library of content, but infusing it with more life and more energy with new content, so new feature films like The Vow, like the next Bond film, like the Hobbit and new television shows, which we're just getting started. We've got a show called Vikings coming up, but we're not even in production yet, so it's really going to come down to the content as I said. It's going to come down to creating new content, envisioning new content, working with creators and then distributing that hopefully to platforms around the world. That's our core strategy, the digital piece overlays with that critically, so many of our distribution partners are now fully digital, or what we call over the top, like Netflix, Hulu, Lovefilm. They're important partners, they're important to our audiences as well as to us in terms of how they access content, so that's become our core business now, and then we're thinking about new and exciting ways to expand our digital thinking and expand our digital application to content, keeping in mind the marketing piece has to be there, that's just the way the world works, but maybe we can go beyond that and have immersive experiences too.

Anne de Kerckhove

When you're looking at original series and you're overlaying that with your want of a digital immersive experience, what's the first few principles you're looking for? What is that says that is the piece of content to create?

Roma Khanna

The first thing is always the story and I have a really wonderful job where people pitch me TV shows now. It's fantastic, because you hear all these wonderful ideas and the ones that work and the ones that start with someone who's passionate about a story, they're passionate about characters, they're passionate about some human failing element, relationship, whatever it might be and they start with that and then they move to the digital afterwards and say, but this is how the story needs to be told, this isn't a story for TV this is a story for Facebook, this is a story for Twitter, this is a story for a gaming environment and then working from there; but it always starts with the story.

Anne de Kerckhove

You've kept the rights of some of your big, upcoming movies haven't you? Like Bond or the Hobbit. Tell us a bit about how that fits into the strategy of rights management and windowing, which are big topics right now.

Roma Khanna

It's everything right now on the distribution side of things. Traditionally, we've sold content in windows, so windows have always been periods of time, but the world is changing now, it's not just periods of time, it's types of access - it's pay television versus free television, it's Netflix versus whatever else it might be, and the time from which a movie gets released to the time where it's available on something like Netflix servers has shortened dramatically and we spend a lot of time thinking about that and thinking about how to manage that process, because business models matter. We can't just put everything out on the first day; that sounds great but I don't know that the monetisation could support the content and the cost of the content if we did that, so we do try to retain rights as much as possible on movies that we co-finance and movies that we're partners in, so that we can take that out and make that an important part of our growth strategy with new titles and new ideas. More and more, I think we'll have digital content to go with that as well.

Anne de Kerckhove

You've obviously inherited a fantastic library and of course, I couldn't mention the library without mentioning the Bond franchise, and so what is in the future of Bond in that digital new world space that we're in and the new TV ecosystem? Does Bond remain Bond and is he fundamentally on film, or is he going to evolve as well?

Roma Khanna

I'm sure he's going to evolve, but again it's about the appropriateness of storytelling. Today, Bond really lives on film and that works. Over time, that will change and over time that will evolve and I hope they get to the hologram version, because I'll be the first to sign up, but right now I think the best way to tell the story has been with the film. It's a classic example of a film that needs the money, it needs the budget, it needs to blow things up, it needs to have...

Roma Khanna

beautiful women and strong people fighting; it needs all of that, because that's the heart and soul of what makes it work.

Anne de Kerckhove

If you wanted people to know three things about the new MGM TV, what would they be?

Roma Khanna

Three things about the new MGM TV is that we're growing and we're growing aggressively and that's an important part of how we view the world. We're entrepreneurial, we don't do it one way. The company tried that, it didn't work, so we're now moving on to being more innovative and more open minded about partnerships and business models and content partnerships and it's that entrepreneurial spirit I think that really drives us. The last point I think is really nothing is crazy right now at MGM, we're open to all new ideas, we'll at least listen.

Anne de Kerckhove

What do you think is the next big greatest opportunity for growth? It's a fantastic time to be in TV, so many opportunities, so much creativity coming on all genres on different platforms, if you had to say the greatest opportunity for growth right now, is it international, is it in new genres, is it in new distribution platforms?

Roma Khanna

I don't think you could pick one, that's a bit of a Sophie's choice. I think it's all of those things and when I think about television, it's reinvented itself so many times. It reinvented itself with Cable television, with multichannel and the multichannel universe when suddenly you went from having four channels to 400 channels. It reinvented itself with the DVR, the PVR, the ability record things and save things and watch them later. It reinvented itself with original content on Cable where suddenly we have these great shows like Homeland and Game of Thrones and I hope Vikings, that could never work on network television in the US, but they thrive. Madmen and Walking Dead, there's such a long list and that didn't exist not that long ago. Each of these reinventions has been about a deeper, better, stronger way to enjoy the content, so wherever we go next is going to be about that emotional experience and connecting into it.

Anne de Kerckhove

Emotion is key, isn't it? It's what makes us connect to content. If you had to give advice to up and coming producers, young producers out there, there's lots of them at MIPTV and MIPCube, tell them, what are the things that you need to see from them?

Roma Khanna

A great story, a well thought out story and absolutely, I think one of the things that fresh thinkers and young, or young in the field, can bring to us is the different way of looking at something, a different perspective, a different way of thinking about technology and integrating into what we're doing, a different way of storytelling. I think that's exciting, it's exciting for us when someone comes into the room with an idea that we couldn't have thought about on our own and that's the key to collaboration and to working with creators is that they come up with stuff that I couldn't tell you what it is, because I didn't think it and I'm not going to think it. Somebody else is going to think it and walk in the door. I think it's just about not throwing out the old for the new and the point of what I was trying to say today is that the thread has always been the same and keep to that and then everything else can change and evolve around it, but that thread has to be the same. It's not about gimmicks, it's about great storytelling.

Anne de Kerckhove

Thank you so much, we'll end on that note. It's been such a pleasure having you.

Roma Khanna

Thank you very much.

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