

Sports Video Market Rapidly Expanding

31,000 venues, networks, arenas or facilities, globally, dedicate the bulk of their time to sports

Sports video documentation and presentation is a growing worldwide television phenomenon, according to a new report titled Sports Video World 2008. Among them there are more than 31,000 venues in all, of whom 15,389 are pro sports arenas and stadiums that dedicate the majority of their time to the presentation of or television coverage of sports, worldwide. Here, we do not count merely TV news outlets that may read sports scores on-air, but those sites, facilities or channels that are specifically devoted to sports, such as ESPN.

Respondents were screened to determine the extent of their involvement in sports video enterprises and to calculate what percent of their daily activity was sports related. Only those respondents whose involvement exceeded 51% were counted as part of the weighting and projecting aspect of the above-noted venue data.

In addition to professional sporting venues such as stadiums and arenas, the report includes college and university sports programmes and venues, broadcast and cable networks that cover sports and sports-oriented production as well as post-production (including mobile/OB) segments. And, this year, in addition to the normal interest in sporting events, we also have the staging of the Beijing Olympics. This adds even greater interest to the coverage and the technology of sports coverage.

Already, many other user segments, such as institutional and broadcast and cable networks devoted large portions of their budgets and personnel to the coverage of sports, but now, as this expands, that emphasis is taking on its own individual identity. Where a decade ago, sport was the stepchild of news, it is now much more common for networks to deploy sports-dedicated channels with no news except sports-related news.

Another part of the report speaks about rental being a common practice in sports video, given the episodic nature of the application. 31% (globally) report that they rented gear between 1 and 5 times annually and a similar number (29%) reported never renting. Additionally, 17% reported renting 25 times or more and 12% reported renting between 11 - 24 times per year. As to where they most often record sports events, 51% reported doing so outdoors, while 49% reported recording indoors. Frame rates varied quite widely, with 23% reporting using 60p, 17% 60i, 14% 24p, 12% 30p, 12% 50p, 12% 25p and 10% other types. In addition to the general effort to provide stronger coverage of sporting events, worldwide and the greater number of sports distribution outlets – mainly in the form of cable, Telco or satellite networks – the surge towards providing all-high definition reportage has been a powerful driver towards the sale of new sports capable TV gear. Where coverage of past sporting events might have been provided, routinely, in standard

definition and only occasionally in HD, now HD and 16 X 9 coverage is becoming absolutely essential and increasingly commonplace. That has stoked the already growing segment and fed its appetite for new sports TV kit. Additionally, the deployment of specifically dedicated sports channels has expanded tremendously in the past decade, as satellite and cable networks have spun off extra services specifically dedicated to the presentation of documentation of sports subjects. Combine that with an insatiable public desire for more sports programming and growth seems inevitable.

Douglas I. Sheer is CEO and chief analyst of DIS Consulting Corporation and can be reached at dougsheer@aol.com