



## TOMORROW CALLING: “EVOLUTION OF NETWORKS, PLATFORMS & DEVICES” PANEL SUMMARY

Red Bee Media’s Tomorrow Calling debate tackles the big issues set to shape the media and technology industry by 2020.

On 27<sup>th</sup> September, Red Bee Media held its inaugural debate on ‘Networks, platforms and devices’ as part of [Tomorrow Calling](#), a year-long study into the future of media, chaired by media commentator Raymond Snoddy – with great success and lively discussion.

Panellists were invited to give their view on where things are going.

### **The media landscape in 2020**

Steve Plunkett, Director of Technology and Innovation at Red Bee Media opened with the view that the biggest theme is an era of accelerating change.

This, he said, was in part to be attributed to the proliferation of high speed internet access predicted to reach 75% of UK households by 2020.

Bruce Daisley, Sales Director at YouTube and Display at Google stated that innovations such as the Kindle had changed the landscape and set the trend of things to come.

Claire Tavernier, Senior Executive VP, FMX and Worldwide Drama at FremantleMedia added that things will get better and faster and that new entrants will help make that happen. Tavernier continued that something else as game-changing as Google will enter the market in the next decade.

Dharmash Mistry, Partner at Balderton Capital projected that we may eventually see media in the cloud as a virtual and not physical product. He predicted that Facebook would become the leading distributor of media by 2020, be that anything from music to film.

John Bishop, Director Strategic Initiatives at Cisco began by saying there will be no second class experience across screens, with all devices as equals, driven by better experiences.



Virgin Media's Ian Mecklenburgh, Director, Consumer Platforms and Devices said digital rights was the priority issue to tackle in the next decade, resolving where and when consumers had the right to watch content.

Media commentator, Raymond Snoddy, then instigated debate amongst the panellists.

### **The future for connected TVs**

Questioning the rate of new technology adoption, Tavernier said that whilst a number of people will get connected TVs, it will take a long time for most to plug them in. She added that the primary use of connected TVs will be for VoD, wherever, whenever and a significant challenge was agreeing a common billing system.

Daisley interjected branding it extraordinary that the biggest screens in the house were not connected. Plunkett said that connected TVs would play a major and ubiquitous role in the future of media, driven by innovation such as Microsoft's Kinetic.

Bishop thought that the most innovation would be away from the TV, saying it has always been regarded as the high-bar but that in the next decade, compared to other devices, it will become the low bar, and potentially this change will come about very quickly.

### **Mobile and tablet devices**

On devices, Plunkett confirmed that tablets had a vital role to play. He said that mobiles were too small for long-form viewing, that computers were too cumbersome but that tablets occupied a sweet spot.

Fighting the corner for traditional broadcasting, Tavernier said she found it hard to believe that linear had no future when over 12m people tune in to watch a programme. She said this brought a lot of value and was not going to go away.

Daisley concurred saying that ITV had got its mojo back and asked if we could see a world without it.

### **Search and discovery**

Turning to search, Bishop said that search will play a far greater role in how viewers find programmes, down to enabling viewers to pull specific, smaller viewing segments from long form content.



Answering a question on the role of Tivo, Mecklenburgh said he didn't expect consumer behaviour to change as quickly as it has, revealing that 20% of users find programmes without the EPG through intelligent search and recommendation.

Mistry argued that the EPG as we know it would not be the main way we'd find out programmes in the future, favouring a search model more synonymous with the web.

### **Content, distribution and monetisation**

On content, Google's Daisley said it is not in their DNA to own content. He added that Google is a catalyst that stimulates wider industry innovation. Mistry contributed that, for good or bad, Facebook is becoming essential as a distribution platform.

Moving on to the question of monetisation, Tavernier said she was sceptical that micropayments would ever fund an entire TV business model. Mistry commented that clinging to yesterday's revenue models is the biggest constraint on the media industry.

Google's Daisley revealed that they are testing technology that only charges clients for video adverts that are watched, allowing viewers to choose to fast forward or not. He added that the less an advert was watched, the more the client would have to pay.

Tavernier said FremantleMedia is working on new, interactive programme formats but that most viewers want a clean broadcast experience, supported by interactive elements on other devices.

Plunkett added that content remains king but the challenge is about packaging and distributing it. Mistry said he did not think YouTube would be the aggregator of high quality video content, but will continue primarily as a platform for user generated content.

### **A bright but challenging future**

The first debate ended in agreement that the UK was in a good place to make the most from the new era of media but that it had its work cut out to avoid domination by American owned distribution platforms.