

MARKET STATUS 3D IN EUROPA

Tuesday June 8th, 2:30pm

Jean Paul Commin, moderator

Charlotte Jones, Screen Digest senior analyst

Jacques Bled, Mac Guff founder & CEO, and Bruno Mahe, Mac Guff technical director

Michel Schmidt, Hérold Family producer

Sari Leinala, Scanbox Entertainment marketing manager

Here, the panellists were allowed to share their insight about the 3D market state of play, underlining production, distribution and exhibition aspects more than technological issues.

According to [Screen Digest](#) senior analyst [Charlotte Jones](#), producers will mainly have to update their skills and their equipment for 3D stereoscopic, while distributors will need to learn how to market 3D as a premium product for their exhibitors. There is indeed a new way of thinking movies, in as much as 3D seems to shatter the current movie industry pattern. Good news is they also have opportunities to take advantage of, particularly the international potential and the investments attraction created by 3D. However, does that mean extra money?... What about the creative part?

Thus, *Azur & Asmar*, *Dragons Hunters* [MacGuff](#) founder and CEO, **Jacques Bled**, and technical director **Bruno Mahe** present the [Despicable Me](#) study case, animation 3D stereoscopic developed with Universal. They explain how [Chris Meledandri](#) (*Ice Age* producer, former VP of Fox Animation), managing the production branch, came to MacGuff for their French *savoir faire* and the director [Pierre Coffin](#), with whom they already worked. MacGuff was supposed to make the whole process from scratch (indeed, they got an inhouse software for randomizing pictures), it was revolutionary for the company, that's why they decided to go for it... In 18 months, the movie was to be delivered and released worldwide, at the same time than the usual competitors like *Toy Story 3* or *Shrek 4*. The budget is confidential, but a 3D stereoscopic movie is 12/15% more expensive than a 2D one (it can rise up to 20/25% for small projects). They hired *Coraline* CG supervisor, [John Benson](#). The hard part of the job is the resistance they have to face, the fear of 3D novelty; on the contrary, the fun part is to help people **thinking in stereo**, to develop this tool still in working process. Even if the 3D market seems to be dominated by USA, Jacques Bled insists on saying that European studios are totally able to do it, the only difference is the budget size. Thus, working with major studios and taking advantage of their financial means, is a way to develop your own technologies.

Still, one of the main concerns with 3D is the framing: the movie needs to be projected in the right way with the 2 eyes projector, and during the making process, to be checked on big screens. If it has not been done right, be prepared to reshoot... To sum up, Jacques Bled says that the good news in France is that talents and facilities are available, but there is still a lack of money.

Keeping up with this idea, **Michel Schmidt**, from animation production company [Hérold & Family](#) (whose main movies are [The True Story of Puss'n'Boots](#) or [Cinderella](#) by Pascal Hérold), insists also on saying it's not possible and relevant to compare European animation productions with the ones from US studios. According to him, the main question is the **availability of screens for 3D animation movies**, in this current shrinking market, in which the good programming dates (Christmas, Easter, Summer) are hunted by US movies. And whereas the production cost is higher for 3D, there is not an extra revenue for distribution (TV and video), so exhibitors and distributors need **to find a new**

distribution pattern (Michel Schmidt thinks that the arrival of the digital file will enable more flexibility in the programming, and so more availabilities for movies to be screened).

If the talent remains still hard to find (high-skilled directors and designers are tracked by US studios which have financial means to be attractive), Michel Schmidt explains the Hérold & Family method for their 3D stereoscopic animation, *Cinderella*, to be directed by Pascal Hérold. So they chose to buy a franchise, known not only in France, but worldwide. Then, they decided to develop it with a multiformat strategy (TV series, website community with a video game, theatrical release). The main asset of Hérold & Family is to be an integrated house, manufacturing the whole story. The whole budget is 12 millions euros. During Cannes Film Festival 2010, the international sales company [Cinemavault](#) did presales, with 3D as an international appeal (it did very well, and they got minimum guarantees higher than they thought: 350 000€ instead of usual 150 000€ for Mexico). So far, it's an advantage to produce in 3D, because few ones have the facilities to do it, but it won't last...

Finally, **Sari Leinala** from Scandinavian distributor [Scanbox](#), with 23 3D premieres scheduled for 2010, talks about the 3D situation in Finland, one of the most advanced market in digital roll out (it's rare enough in Europe to underline that the exhibitor equipment has been paid by the Finnish Film Foundation and the Treasury department – aka lottery money). Indeed, **3D has been the driving force for digitalising**, with the possibility of flexible programming (getting more premieres, getting wide on the country from the first week). So far, customers are choosing 3D (when there are 2 versions offered). Scanbox has released *Street Dance 3D* (they bought it at the Berlin Film Festival 2010) on May 28th with 34 screens, one week after the British release. The movie opened the same week than *Prince of Persia* and *Robin Hood*, and started as number 3 in Finland (14 000 admissions in 10 days, for a global estimation of 25 000 admissions).

To come full circle, moderator Jean Paul Commin says that, after all, 3D will be the same as 2D: it is an opportunity, it's fashionable for the audience. New experience, but who gets the extra money?

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