IBC2021 Awards celebrate the spirit of collaboration and innovation

LONDON, UK – 23rd November 2021 – IBC today announces the winners of the highly coveted IBC2021 Innovation Awards, held exclusively on IBC Digital. This year’s awards celebrated collaboration and innovation within the content and technology industry, where organisations identified a market challenge and worked together to create a solution.

The IBC2021 International Honour for Excellence, IBC’s highest accolade, was presented to Barbara Slater, BBC Director of Sport. She is the first woman to hold the post and a pioneer for women in sports broadcasting worldwide. Barbara was appointed BBC Director of Sport in 2009, and one of her first challenges was to develop the remarkable multi-platform coverage of the 2012 London Olympics. Today, she works closely with other broadcasters and sports bodies, including advising the International Olympics Commission. In 2014 she was made an OBE for her services to sports broadcasting.

"I would like to say a huge thank you to IBC. I am incredibly honoured to receive this prestigious award. During my time at BBC Sport, I have seen an industry transformed. Technology has paved the way for extraordinary quality and an extraordinary range of choice that audiences can now enjoy," said Barbara Slater. "On a personal note, I want to mention the momentum we now see behind women’s sport, and I’m incredibly proud that BBC Sport has been a part of that because we now see women athletes celebrated in a way that they should for their achievements. I feel fortunate and proud to have worked in the sports industry for many years, and I’m incredibly optimistic about its future."

IBC Innovation Awards

BT Sport won the Innovation Award for Content Everywhere for developing new technologies for the BT Sport App to recreate the matchday experience for live sports fans watching their favourite teams at home.

"I am delighted BT Sport’s app won an IBC award. We’re so proud of our innovations around the app, such as our matchday experience features," said Jamie Hindhaugh, COO of BT Sport. "I must also call out our community of fantastic partners Second Spectrum, Sceenic, Visualise, Tiled Media, Deltatre, Moov and Opta. Thank you to them, and thank you to IBC for this award."

Four other projects were shortlisted in this category: DFL Deutsche Fußball Liga for enhancing the Bundesliga world feed with an interactive service; In The Room used AI and exclusive Ultra HD content for consumers to interact “face-to-face” with personalities like Nile Rodgers; Mediapro was shortlisted for the rapid growth of Ubeat, its esports and entertainment multiplatform; and Sky Sports and SimplyLive for their remote production partnership, which created and delivered a true cloud-based, multicamera production environment which also has a positive environmental impact.
Riot Games won the IBC2021 Innovation Award for Content Distribution for being the first organisation in the world to use JPEG XS compression for two major trans-Atlantic esports tournaments.

“Thank you so much for this honour. On behalf of everyone at Riot Games, we would like to say thank you first to our fans around the world for supporting us at our events. This was an incredibly challenging year to deliver a world-class production, let alone trial a new and never tested before technology. To our team of talented engineers at Riot and our tech partners, I couldn’t be more proud of what we’ve accomplished. Thank you, IBC, for supporting innovation in our industry and for recognising us with this award.” said Scott Adametz, Director, Infrastructure Engineering at Riot Games.

An additional four projects were shortlisted in this category, including: Boeing for live-streaming the Starliner’s return from orbit in HD broadcast quality, with sub-one second latency from a remote desert location for NASA TV; BT Sport for delivering fully remote coverage of the 2021 UEFA Europa League Final from Poland in 4k HDR and Dolby Atmos sound; MGM Studios for launching a new blockchain-backed platform with Eluvio that provides a more efficient, secure and cost-effective way to deliver content to its distributors from a library of more than 20,000 film and television titles; and Migo for creating an entirely new way to deliver digital content in countries that lack a widespread broadband infrastructure.

Remote Recording Network with technology partners led by Riedel Communications won the IBC Innovation Award for Content Creation for producing the first fully decentralised production of a live, global music event.

“Remote Recording Network and Riedel Communications are happy to have received an IBC Innovation Award for our joint project Around the World in 80 milliseconds.” said Peter Brandt, CEO, Remote Recording Network. “Our team connected camera operators, lighting designers, video directors and sound engineers scattered across the globe, proving once and for all that it is possible to control an entire music event production remotely. I want to thank TV Scala and Riedel and all our supporting partners, video, lighting and sound directors and the forty piece crew around Europe and the US who made this happen.”

Three other projects were finalists in this category: Netflix for creating the first Ever hand-drawn anime with experimental 4k and HDR; Songbird, which was the first American feature film to return to production during the covid lockdown using camera to cloud technology; and Timeline Television for its remote broadcast app Stream Anywhere which helped major UK broadcasters’ production teams film remotely from a range of locations.

IBC Special Award

IBC2021 chose to present a special award to NBCUniversal for its technical work around bringing the Tokyo Olympic Games to its audience and offering them the chance to enjoy live action in Ultra HD: 4k resolution, high dynamic range colour and Dolby Atmos sound. While production processes for recorded, scripted content in Ultra HD are now well established, NBCUniversal has led the way in developing the necessary technology for single-stream production workflows in sport.
NBCUniversal covered the whole content pipeline, from acquisition and management of 4k content in the HLG colour space to a new version of its Skypath distribution system, ensuring the Ultra HD versions were made available to more than 200 local TV stations across the USA. This ensured that the full 4k, HDR, Dolby Atmos Ultra HD experience was available to 70% of the country.

David Mazza, CTO of NBC Sports Group and Olympics and Clarence Hau, SVP of NBCUniversal Operations & Technology, said, “We are honoured to be recognised by IBC with this prestigious award. The Tokyo Games culminated years of live HDR and Atmos production and distribution development, leading to today’s refined techniques.

“We are grateful to IBC for recognising this achievement by the technical teams across NBC Sports and Operations & Technology.”

Best Technical Paper
The IBC2021 Award for Best Technical Paper goes to a large team from BBC Research & Development, for their contribution *Stronger together: cross-service media recommendations.*

The aim of the paper is to present consumers with a single portal to multiple media sites, with intelligent references between services. If a consumer frequently listens to a particular singer on Spotify, for example, the service would also send notifications when that performer is available on BBC radio and television content, available online.

The team tackled the legal, commercial and ethical challenges of securing consumer data and maintaining each services business goals, while maximising the benefit to the user. This involved using the latest thinking on public data storage and protection, as well as developing a demonstrator smartphone app.

Hannes Ricklefs of BBC Research & Development, one of the authors of the paper, said “We see the broadcast industry moving into the online space, going beyond television and radio. We need to find ways to bring our public service broadcasting onto digital services. Within that, we believe that handling of personal data in a privacy-preserving way, with ethical controls, is a very important topic.

“We’re grateful for this award because we hope that the blueprint we have described in the paper will be a catalyst for more innovation and development in this space.”

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About IBC
As the world’s most inspiring content and technology event, IBC’s mission is to Empower Content Everywhere by driving thought leadership and innovation across the 250,000 strong global IBC community.

IBC is leading the way in a new era of hybrid events, enabling the industry to gather again for the first time in a while in a specially created safe environment. Whether onsite in Amsterdam or online at home, IBC2021 will re-unite exhibitors, speakers, visitors, so they can engage with each other, unlock business opportunities, discover the latest innovations and explore the exciting world of content together.
In addition to the world-class exhibition and conference, IBC also encompasses the IBC Daily, IBCTV, and IBC365. For further information, please visit: www.ibc.org

**IBC2021 Dates**

Conference: 3-6 December 2021  
Exhibition: 3-6 December 2021

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