

## A Word from the AAFA Board of Directors

The Advanced Authoring Format Association, Inc.™ (AAFA) is growing in membership, activities and developments, all of which are good for AAFA and the industry. To ensure that all members are kept informed and aware of association plans and progress, this newsletter has been created to share highlights with you. It's not our intent to add to your email with a lengthy document, but to provide highlights of association news. You're welcome to share this with your colleagues, add email addresses to the

newsletter distribution list, or opt out of newsletter distribution. We welcome your feedback and invite you to send your comments and distribution requests to Barbara Main (mainbee@tds.net).

Please check the website periodically for more in-depth information, current happenings and valuable member resources. We hope you enjoy this newsletter and encourage you to actively participate in your association.

## October Engineering Report

The AAF Engineering group met at Avid Technology in Tewksbury on 17-19 October 2005, with representatives from the AAF Association, Autodesk, Avid Technology, BBC, DiskStream, Metaglue, PAR Government Systems, Pixar Animation Studios, SAIC, Snell & Wilcox, and Sony. The main areas of discussion were AAF v1.2 (which adds MXF capability to the AAF toolkit) and AAF compliance testing.

A pre-release prototype of AAF v1.2 was shown at IBC in September demonstrating MXF interoperability. The engineering group discussed the remaining work required before the toolkit can be officially released. Required work includes completing the implementation of new classes used in MXF, completing the dictionary restructuring, implementing APIs for stream access and handling property definitions with dynamic local tags. The aim is to have a single toolkit, capable of accessing both AAF and MXF files, so software developers need only invest in a single API.

For AAF compliance testing, the completed file analyzer framework was presented by DiskStream's Jim Trainor. Following an analysis of the testing requirements of the AAF Edit Protocol, AAFA's Developer, Andrew Kowpak, is implementing a set of tests to measure conformance to the Edit Protocol, to be completed by year-end.

All software in development is available to try out via the AAF CVS repository on sourceforge.net, and complete meeting minutes and documents are posted on the website.

The AAF Association thanks Avid for hosting the meeting and providing attendees with an interesting tour of their facility. The next Engineering meeting will be hosted by Grass Valley in Beaverton, Oregon, March 15-17, 2006. All members are also invited to attend the AAFA Annual General Meeting, which will be held on March 16, 2006.

## AAF @ IBC2005

The AAF Association shared a booth with member Metaglue at IBC last month, which generated good industry exposure, two publication articles, extremely positive responses to AAF demonstrations, ten new membership leads, and 61 pre-qualified leads. Thanks to the following AAF members for their financial and in-kind support: Adobe, Ascent Media, Avid, BBC R&D, CNN/Turner, DiskStream, Metaglue, and Snell & Wilcox. The Board will continue to monitor the results of this meeting's activities to determine association plans for 2006 conferences.



AAF Booth at IBC2005. From left to right: Brad Gilmer (AAFA), Tom Pike (DiskStream), Neil Dunstan and Ian Baker (Metaglue).

## AAFA Membership – Strong and Growing Stronger

The AAF Association currently has 40 members and membership applications are pending. Check the website for a list of current members, and please welcome our newest members:

- Konan Technology, Inc.
- Ninsight
- RPPtv Ltd
- Visible World, Inc.

## July Board Meeting Highlights

The AAF Board meets face-to-face several times a year for in-depth discussion of AAFA issues, challenges and plans, and they met in New York on July 27. The agenda was lengthy, discussion lively, and progress was made on the following issues:

### AAFA Roadmap and Projects

Phil Tudor, BBC R&D, updated the board on engineering projects and focused on the work of V1.1 – Edit Protocol, V1.2 – MXF, and V1.3 – XML. The Roadmap is posted on the website in the “Technical” tab.

### AAF Edit Protocol

The AAF Edit Protocol establishes a baseline of interoperability for editing applications. This work has been completed – the AAF Association Specification v1.1 includes Edit Protocol functionality, and Edit Protocol functionality is now available in the AAF Association’s SDK.

### Testing and Conformance

The AAF Association is developing a conformance and compliance test suite. This suite includes a testing infrastructure along with a series of discreet tests, which can be used to determine compliance with AAF Association specifications. The first suite of tests is aimed at the Edit Protocol. The test infrastructure is complete, and we have identified all of the compliance points specified in the Edit Protocol. Several tests have already been written, and others are on the way.

### MXF Interoperability

Version 1.2 of the AAF Association Specifications provides interoperability with MXF. Specifically, this will allow implementers to read and write MXF files using the AAF Association SDK. While significant work remains, initial code has been checked in to the Association’s Source Forge site and may be downloaded for free.

### AAF XML

Version 1.3 of the AAF Specifications allows implementers to persist AAF files as XML. This work is largely complete, but since this proposal is supported by a document working its way through the SMPTE Standardization process, we have been awaiting finalization of the Standard before declaring a 1.3 SDK release. XML code has been checked in to the Association’s Source Forge site and may be downloaded for free. As with V1.2, this code has not been released yet.

## SMPTE Standardization

The AAF Association Board of Directors has been seriously weighing the benefits of submitting the AAF Object Model Specification to the SMPTE for standardization. We are continuing to investigate this and are currently assessing the resources required, and the potential benefits.

## AAFA’s Position on MXF

The AAF Association continues to strongly support the Material eXchange Format (MXF). As co-creator of the format along with the Pro-MPEG Forum and the SMPTE, we believe that MXF plays a critical role in network-based workflows.

The AAF Association Board has adopted a position statement on MXF, and this is now available on our website and was distributed at IBC.

Additionally, the AAF Association is working with the SMPTE to develop an understanding that continues the designed-in inter-working between AAF and MXF. This inter-working was strongly supported by the Zero Divergence Doctrine (ZDD), which was agreed between the AAF Association and the Pro-MPEG Forum.

Now that MXF has moved into SMPTE, the AAF Association and SMPTE are striving to continue to build on the success of the original ZDD.

## AAFA Marketing Objectives

Mark Sangster, DiskStream, presented a comprehensive marketing plan to appropriately position and promote the AAFA at upcoming trade shows. (See the full plan and objectives in the Member Resources section on the website.)

With successful participation at IBC leading to valuable press coverage and increased membership, the AAFA will participate in the following 2006 shows: the HPA Technology Retreat, NAB, SIGGRAPH and IBC.

Additionally, the AAFA will host two Awareness Events to bring experts, vendors and end-users together to share their knowledge of AAF technology. The first event is tentatively scheduled for March 2006 in Los Angeles, with a second event to follow in New York City.

These shows are a means of promoting AAF technology, the compatibility and inter-relationship of AAF and MXF, and highlighting the unique nature of the AAF Association, as a collaborative group of industry leaders working to the common goal of developing and promoting a file format designed to exchange essence and metadata across multiple platforms, applications and systems.