

Chris Dodd Pushes Back Against Hollywood Vs. Technology Criticisms In SMPTE Address

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The MPAA's new head looks past the industry's resistance to innovation in the modern era and vows to embrace tech to fight piracy.

Former Senator **Chris Dodd**, in his new role as Chairman and CEO of the Motion Picture Association of America, on Wednesday decried "those who would pit" Hollywood content creators against those in Silicon Valley who create technology "in a manufactured conflict more reminiscent of the Beltway chatter I learned to ignore on my last job."

Speaking in Los Angeles to the fall conference of SMPTE, a group of entertainment industry technologists, Dodd complained that some of those in the tech world see those in the film and TV industry as "dinosaurs, clinging desperately to a broken business model and stubbornly refusing to evolve."

Dodd insisted "this criticism" ignores "a century of innovation in film and television. Time and again, artists and technicians have worked with innovators and entrepreneurs to embrace new technology, reinvent our business model, and reinvigorate our industry."

Glossing over Hollywood's general lack of research and development in the modern era, and its historical initial resistance to everything from pay TV to home video, Dodd focused on how show business eventually came to see these technologies as important new revenue sources.

"The partnership between content producers and technologists," said Dodd, "has unleashed the imagination of storytellers, opened the door to a new wave of exciting experiences for consumers – and helped to keep our industry strong."

Dodd talked about how new platforms like the Internet and mobile are important ways to distribute the content produced by Hollywood, and noted that UltraViolet is just launching to provide a way to store movies, TV, music and other IP in a computer "cloud," where it can be accessed at any time.

Dodd cited the late **Steve Jobs**, whose philosophy was, to paraphrase hockey star Wayne Gretzky, always skate "where the puck is going to be, not where it has been."

"Our own successes," said Dodd, "have come when we skated to where the puck was going."

Dodd [quoted an article](#) that Fox co-chairman and CEO **Jim Gianopulos** wrote for *The Hollywood Reporter* about Jobs shortly after his passing. In the article Gianopulos recalled speaking to Jobs a few weeks before his death. Jobs said to him: "Don't let what happened to the music business happen to yours. Keep coming up with better ways to provide people with your content."

That spoke to the heart of the message Dodd had come to deliver, that at a time of high unemployment and economic uncertainty Hollywood and the technology industries have a shared need to address the piracy of intellectual property.

"Content theft is no victimless crime," said Dodd. "It is theft, just as breaking into Tiffany's to steal jewelry is theft. And yet, according to a recent poll, a full 13% of the adult population – 29 million American adults – have downloaded or watched illegal copies of movies or TV shows online."

Rather than having some in Silicon Valley complain one cause of piracy is that Hollywood is too slow to use technology to deliver content on every platform as soon as possible, Dodd said they must work together.

"I'm asking SMPTE to stand with our coalition, to bring your expertise and your numbers to bear as we fight back against the theft of our product," said Dodd. "If we are to remain a thriving industry, we must join together to protect our content. And if we are to remain a thriving industry, the film and TV industry must also remain an innovation industry."