

A week at the IBC

How everything started

For the last half century, people from all around the world have reunited once a year to share their insights about broadcasting, media, entertainment and technology in an event called IBC. This convention takes place in Amsterdam and it is the world's most influential event of its type; this year I had the honor to be part of this experience as an IABM invited.

My journey to the IBC started a year ago, when the Université Polytechnique Hauts de France - where I study I master's degree in special effects - asked me to participate along with my classmates in the IABM Student Award Competition. The prize of this competition was an invitation to the most prestigious broadcasting event: The IBC.

The contest consisted of writing an article about a new media technologie and then making a presentation about it. I decide to take the challenge and I chose to take as a topic what I consider to be one of the most interesting fields of our time: IA and automation.

I wrote my article using as one of my main references a proof-of-concept built by the the BBC Research and Development called Ed. It has as goal to automate the shooting and editing in live events using machine learning and AI.

After a lot of researching and writing I submit my article and made my presentation in front of a group of university professors. A couple of weeks later one of my teachers told me that I had been selected for the second round so I did my presentation again, this time in front of a jury. I cannot even describe my excitement when a couple of hours later I received a mail announcing that I was one of the winners. I was going to Amsterdam to attend the IBC.

The IBC

When the day finally arrived, my colleague Marc Rouillet and I were received along with the winners from other countries by Dominic Louks, the IABM events manager. He gave us a warm welcoming and told us all we had to know about the event.

The IBC was even bigger than anything I could ever imagine - I am not ashamed to admit that I got lost more than a couple of times during the first days. It was divided into different zones, each one with a different theme: creation, management, delivery, etc. It was full with exhibitors and booths from all around the globe, each of them showcasing new technologies, products and systems. It was the present and future of the industry in one place.

In addition to the booths and exhibitors, there were speakers giving talks in the different forums of the IBC. I attended to many of them and they were really mind opening. From the Hollywoods vision for the future of production in 2030 to Artificial intelligence and machine learning in M&A. It was enthralling to hear the presentations and debates about the state of the industry and what may be waiting for us in the near future.

Of course it is no secret that the media industry - and the world in general - is quickly changing in an unprecedented manner. Because of this, the so called Global Gamechangers talks grabbed my attention immediately.

One of them was about the business gamechangers, where people from Bauer Media, Vice and Pluto TV had a fascinating discussion about their different business models and their advantages, disadvantages and the possibilities brought by new technologies.

Later I assisted to a very thought-provoking talk by Gary Shapiro. He shared his views about technology innovation and how could that translate into all other domains of our day to day lives - like health, communication and politics. As a nice gesture he gave away a copy of his latest book *Ninja future*, which my friend Marc and I got signed at the end of the talk.

Another very stimulating talk was the one by Andy Seriks, the talented actor behind the Lord of the Rings character Gollum and the founder of the production company The Imaginarium. He talked about his career and what he sees as the future of motion capture, augmented reality, theater and cinema. Later he showed us some of the work that he has been doing in The Imaginarium. Andy Seriks insights about the possibilities of the latest technologies in the entertainment industry really opened my mind into a whole new perspective.

As I said before, the IBC was divided in different areas; one of the more interesting ones was the Future zone. It is exactly what its name promises, here the companies showcase their advancements in new technologies.

In the Future zone everyone was able to have a glimpse of new products and prototypes - even try some of them personally, which was very impressive. In this area I also had the opportunity to assist to a debate about the raising ethical questions that come with the advancement of technology - like deepfake and AI. There was a passionate exchange of opinions where even the definition of human was being reframed.

While visiting the stands of the Future zone I had some conversations with the people in there. It was enlightening to hear them talk about the process behind their innovations, the future of their projects, what they think the upcoming of the industry was and their career paths.

One of the most noteworthy of this conversation was with the BBC Research and Development, the creators of Ed. Ed was the main topic of my article, so in a way I was there thanks to them. They were really friendly and I was able to ask them a lot more about their work and their upcoming projects.

The opportunity to talk with the team behind Ed was one of the most significant experiences for me during the IBC. Not only I had a chance to learn more about their work, but it was very inspiring to talk with the people who developed something that captivate me for weeks. It is funny, but they passed from being faceless entities of the internet to real people who I could talk to and that was a strong motivation for me to keep pursuing a career in this industry.

Finally, we - the students invited by the IABM - had a small meeting with John Ive. He shared with us what he have learned during his long career. He told us to put ourselves out, to share our work and to be honest. Even though we only talked for around half an hour, his words really resonated with me.

My conclusions after an amazing week

This week at the IBC has been one of the most enriching experiences in my life. I learned a lot about media, technologie and the entertainment industry, but more important than that, I did it while sharing with some fascinating people from around the globe.

It is hard to put into words the impression that the IBC made on me. There is a saying that goes: "if you are the smartest person in the room, then you are in the wrong room". If that is true, then the IBC is the best room in the world. It is a privilege to be able talk with so many brilliant people from all around the world. I think that the real theme of this event was curiosity. Everyone was eager to learn and everyone was eager to share, this is in my opinion the most valuable thing of the IBC.



