



The National Association
of Theatre Owners

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Our members have expressed concern over the content and process of recent changes introduced by DCI's Errata #4 to the DCI Digital Cinema Technical Specification. The immediate concern is DCI's reach into theatre design. We respect the work DCI has undertaken to ensure the delivery of quality digital product. But the design of the theatre, including the selection of lenses, screens, and masking systems, is the domain of the theatre owner. I am advised that the digital delivery format chosen by DCI for multiple aspect ratios does not match the manner in which auditorium projection systems are designed. That means inevitable technical compromises in presenting digital motion pictures. The transition to digital cinema will proceed much more smoothly if decision-making directly affecting theatres includes theatre participation.

This immediate concern gives rise to a larger process concern. DCI remains an important specifications body in digital cinema. Many if not all financial arrangements for digital cinema equipment are tied to compliance with the DCI specification. Our members are thus concerned about the unavailability of DCI as an organization. We are concerned about the lack of a DCI representative. We are concerned that DCI is making changes to its specification without adequate discussion of the issues with our members. Most importantly, we are concerned that DCI will change its specification in a manner that will cause economic injury to our members, either through equipment revisions imposed by the specification, or through new compliance thresholds for receiving content that some studios may try to enforce. Our members are watching closely for some constructive discussion of these important issues.

A vehicle exists for the discussion and socialization of issues between studios and exhibitors in Inter-Society for the Enhancement of Cinema Presentation. It is important that all DCI members participate in these meetings, as we believe that many problems can be solved through open dialogue and debate.

In the transition from film to digital projection systems, the investment risk is partly mitigated by the stability of the specifications and standards deployed. We again express the need for equipment specifications that meet the agreed requirements of all participants, and a unified program for digital cinema system certification. We believe that Inter-Society provides an industry-wide organization under which this work can begin, and encourage DCI members to join NATO members in pursuit of a certification program.

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