

SA interview with Editor James Ling of Pro-Audio MEA



Duncan Riley of DWR with James Ling, Editor of Pro-Audio MEA / Asia and Worship AVL.

James Ling is the editor of Pro Audio Asia / Pro Audio MEA and Worship AVL. It was lovely for Duncan Riley and the DWR Distribution team to meet him on his recent visit to South Africa. We asked James a few questions and really enjoyed reading his answers.

Q: Biochemistry with some radio work on the side is a far cry from becoming the editor of Pro-Audio Media. Could you describe events leading up to your position at Pro-Audio?

You're right, biochemistry is a long way removed from editing Pro Audio MEA! Although I went to uni to study biochemistry, I quickly discovered I was actually a detriment to science. My housemate was heavily involved with the student radio station, so I thought I would go along and join him. We mucked around on air for a few years, but in that time he also became the chief engineer of the station. He got enthused about all the gear we were using and that passion rubbed off on me too.

After I graduated I found a job in marketing, but it wasn't for me so I headed back to uni to train to be a scientific writer. This again involved using a lot of different broadcast equipment, both audio and visual, and some time on the student radio station as well as one of the local commercial stations. With that qualification done, I took the first writing job I could find and did my apprenticeship to become a journalist. When the opportunity arose to edit Pro Audio MEA, it was too good to turn down. It gave me the chance to write about something that I have a real interest in.

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What interests do you have outside of work?

I used to play a lot of sports – rugby, football and cricket were my main ones. While my body no longer lets me play them, I still get a huge amount of enjoyment from watching them.

Aside from that, history is of great interest to me. My wife and I are members at the British Museum, so you can

often find me exploring the galleries there.

Have you seen much change in the industry since you joined Pro-Audio seven years ago?

The change in the industry has been phenomenal over the last few years. I think that elements in every part of every signal chain are getting smarter and are able to do much more. There has been the rise of IP to the point that it is now a major factor in just about every area I cover. Another big change has been the way we all have to handle challenges in the RF spectrum. Reduced bandwidth means that wireless solutions now have to be much cleverer and it is always more of a challenge to find enough space.

What do you enjoy most about your work?

I love that no two days are the same. I get to visit some amazing places, see things that I never thought I would and meet some incredible people. The best thing though is I get to share their stories with the world. People in the Middle East and Africa are doing some really innovative things and it is great to be able to shine a light on that.

If money or career were no object, where in the world would you choose to live?

I've been very fortunate that my life has taken me to some amazing places. Cities like Dubai, Muscat, Johannesburg, Istanbul and Beirut are very special to me. But I'm a bit of a softie, so if I could live anywhere in the world it would be Bath in the UK. It's where my wife and I fell in love and it is a city that feels like home every time we visit.

If you could choose one superpower, what would it be and why?

With great power comes great responsibility and I don't think I could ever be super-responsible! But if I had to pick one it would be teleportation. It would be nice to still do all the travel I do for my job but still head home every night.

On a serious note, could you tell us about the Pro-Audio team and what it is that makes you all work so well together to produce this excellent publication and website?

I'm very fortunate to be part of such a good team. We have a great boss, Richard, who has built the company from nothing and sets the example for us all. He works far too hard and never expects us to do anything he wouldn't. Our sales director, Sue, is the best in the business and provides huge levels of support to us all.

On the editorial side, along with myself we have Adrian our designer who makes the magazine look beautiful. Simon is our senior reporter. He has come from the industry and probably has the most technical knowledge of us all. When I don't know the answer to something, it's him I turn to. The latest addition to our team is Young James. This is his first writing job, but he has a huge natural talent and an amazing capacity for learning. The final office-based member of the team is Nick who looks after everything IT. He is responsible for the website looking as good as it does and generally keeping us functioning as a company.

Outside the office we have three more editorial staff – Caroline who looks after our Asia title, Damian who is a local correspondent for me in Dubai and Frank who takes care of our Worship publication. They are some of the best-known and most talented writers you could ever wish to meet. Joining Frank in the US is Carolyn who is one of the most tenacious sales reps I've ever met. Over in Singapore we have Marne who handles our circulation and Raymond who manages the printing process. Both of them are vital to the production of the mag and I don't know what we would do without them. Finally in China we have Frank and Su who are responsible for the Chinese edition of our Asia mag. They do an incredible job ensuring the work we do here gets to as wide an audience as possible.

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