



BEN LEEVES: "SAVVY WITH SOUND"

Stop turning a deaf ear to sound design

AS CONSUMERS become increasingly fussy about the quality of sound on audiovisual works, the more important the audio element has become in brands' video messages, said Ben Leeves, sound designer at London-based post-production house Grand Central Recording Studios (GCRS).

Leeves, who spoke at the Creative Collaboration Debate this week, said the audio requirement in digital entertainment has undergone radical changes in the past five years.

And instead of bolting on the sound design at the end of the creative process, brand-owners must bring it in at the very beginning if they want to retain consumers' attention during a campaign's message, he added. "Consumers are becoming very savvy with sound. If they weren't, sound bars and headphones would not be

selling as well as they are. If they hear something good, they know it."

Until a few years ago, sound distributed on the internet would break up frequently because the bandwidth was not powerful enough. But with improvements in broadband technology, it is now possible to access large video files via streaming platforms, including Netflix. "It won't be long before Netflix has cinema-standard 5.1 surround sound [as opposed to stereo], followed by virtual reality shortly after," Leeves said.

The significance of audio in the soundtracks of movie classics such as *Jaws* and *Psycho* confirm the need to appreciate sound design as a creative format, Leeves said. With the progress of digital media, "there is more on the palette of sounds for post-production houses to work with", he added. ■