

**BLU DIGITAL GROUP'S PAULETTE PANTOJA NAMED RECIPIENT OF
DEG'S 2022 "HEDY LAMARR AWARD
FOR INNOVATION IN ENTERTAINMENT TECHNOLOGY"**

LOS ANGELES (July 5, 2022) - DEG: The Digital Entertainment Group will present **Paulette Pantoja, Founder & CEO at Blu Digital Group**, with the **2022 Hedy Lamarr Award for Innovation in Entertainment Technology**. In its sixth year, the Hedy Lamarr Award recognizes female executives in the fields of entertainment and technology who have made a significant contribution to the industry.



Pantoja, who is widely respected throughout the digital entertainment industry as a media technologist and entrepreneur, founded Blu Digital Group in 2007 with a focus on quality control for film and TV content distributed on physical media. Her focus on proprietary workflows and her patented applications have since grown the company into a go-to solution for content owners and platforms of all sizes that need to deliver streaming content at highest quality and with best user experience. Blu Digital Group's cloud-based automation software for content distribution has demonstrated real innovation, and Pantoja's expansion of the localization division within Blu in 2021 further broadened the company's ability to deliver international content to audiences around the world.

The **2022 Hedy Lamarr Achievement Award for Emerging Leaders in Entertainment Technology**, honoring a female college student whose studies in the fields of entertainment and technology have shown exceptional promise, will be presented at the same time to **Danielle Takahashi**, an undergraduate student at the **University of Southern California** who is majoring in Media Arts and Practice in the School of Cinematic Arts.



To encourage and enable this initiative-taking student to pursue opportunities in entertainment technology, she will receive a financial award to continue her education.

The awards will be presented during an in-person event in Los Angeles in the fall.

“It is my honor and pleasure to recognize Paulette Pantoja, who is well known to many in the DEG community, with this year’s Innovation Award. Throughout her career, Paulette has focused on proprietary workflows and her patented applications help streamline key operational aspects for entertainment companies. By extension, consumers benefit every day from Paulette’s innovations,” said Amy Jo Smith, President & CEO, DEG. “It is also an immense pleasure to present the Achievement Award to Danielle Takahashi to support her use of her artistic skills for empowerment, social justice, and fostering empathy through storytelling. The 2022 Hedy Award winners are remarkable women in their field who clearly share Hedy’s passion for innovation.”

“I am so excited to accept the Hedy Lamarr Innovation Award from DEG,” said Pantoja. “I strive to build a culture of innovation and inclusion at Blu Digital, and DEG is helping to do that on an industry level with these awards recognizing women, who have traditionally been underrepresented in media technology. The pace of technology is always evolving, and I am honored to accept this recognition of Blu’s dedication to developing better and more efficient media management workflows.”

Austrian American actor Lamarr was a Hollywood legend who is best known for her roles in film classics including *Samson and Delilah*, *The Strange Woman* and *Tortilla Flat*. She was also a lifelong inventor whose innovative work included pioneering “frequency hopping,” which became the foundation for spread spectrum technology. Conceived by Lamarr and composer George Antheil for radio guidance systems and patented in 1942, this highly secure technology resists interference and dropout, and is used today for a variety of cellular, Wi-Fi and Bluetooth applications.

To honor Lamarr, the Innovation Award seeks to recognize and commemorate female industry leaders who have made a similar impact in the field of entertainment technology. Past honorees include Geena Davis, Founder and Chair of the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media; Nonny de la Peña, CEO of Emblematic Group; Dean Willow Bay of the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism; Sara DeWitt, VP of PBS KIDS Digital; and Poppy Crum, Former Chief Scientist at Dolby Laboratories.

To determine the award winners, DEG enlisted industry leaders including members of its Canon Club Advisory Board, which comprises a cross-section of senior executives representing the entertainment, technology, IT and consumer electronics industries. Among other factors, the judging panel based its decisions on the candidates' embodiment of the following principles: Innovation, Engagement and Excellence.

About Paulette Pantoja

After working at Ascent Media and Panasonic Hollywood Labs, Paulette Pantoja set up Blu as the first dedicated Blu-ray Disc testing facility. In 2015, she evolved the business to provide content services for the digital media supply chain, leveraging Blu's cloud-based automation software for content distribution to broadcasters and OTT platforms. In 2017, Blu began licensing its software to give clients control and visibility of their content preparation and distribution workflows. The company now also provides localization services and ad-insertion technology. Since its founding, Blu Digital Group has reached over 300 million viewers, provided media services for more than 25 film and TV titles recognized by the Academy Awards and Emmy Awards, and has serviced three million content hours. In 2021, Blu was recognized as one of the Inc. 5000 Fastest-Growing Private Companies in the U.S. and Pantoja this year is an Ernst & Young Greater Los Angeles Entrepreneur of The Year 2022 finalist.

About Danielle Takahashi

Danielle Takahashi works at the intersection of art and science in the Media Arts and Practice program in the School of Cinematic Arts at the University of Southern California, from which she expects to graduate in 2023. She works in 3D game art, motion graphics, arts-based research, education, science visualization, and music visuals with the goal of creating a healing process to overcome social issues, and to prompt and guide emotional journeys through storytelling. While at USC, she has been developing a speculative design structure to combat the habitat fragmentation of bees and engage the public to be closer to the life cycles around them. She writes, directs and animates short films, including a multimedia piece for the Wrigley Institute for Environmental Studies on the Kelp Biofuel Project, an innovative approach for cultivating kelp in the open ocean. Takahashi also works as a motion graphic artist with Top Dawg Entertainment artist Lance Skiiwalker and the curated Instagram page Ni_Radio.

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About DEG

DEG advocates and promotes entertainment platforms, products and distribution channels that support the movie, television, music, consumer electronics and IT industries.

DEG membership is comprised of: A+E Networks, Altman Solon, AMC Networks, AMC Theatres, Amazon Prime, Amazon Studios, Amazon Web Services, Anuvu, Ateliere, AT&T, BBC Studios, BB Media, BIGtoken, BLINTN, Bitmax, Blu, Breaker, Cinedigm, Cinelytic, Comcast Cable, Deepdub, Deloitte, Deluxe Digital, Disney+, Dolby Laboratories, DTS, Inc., ESPN+, Fabric, Fandango/Vudu, FilmRise, GfK Entertainment, Giant Interactive, Google Play, Guts + Data, Intel, Irdeto, IRIS.TV, IYUNO-SDI Group, LG Electronics USA, Limelight, Lionsgate, Looper Insights, Mediagenix, MGM, Microsoft, Microsoft Azure, Movies Anywhere, MPN, NAGRA, NPD Group, Omdia, Paramount Global, Paramount Home Entertainment, PBS Distribution, Peacock, Pixelogic, Pixelworks, Plex, Premiere Digital, Redbox, Respeecher, Row8, Samsung Electronics, Screen Engine/ASI, SmithGeiger, Sonopress, Sony Electronics, Spherex, STARZ, Synamedia, Technicolor, TiVo, TreeTrunk, Trusted Partner Network, Universal Pictures Home Entertainment, Verizon Business Group, Visual Data, Vizio, Vobile, Vubiquity, Vuulr, Warner Bros. Discovery, Whip Media, Wondrium, XL8, Xperi, and ZOO Digital.