

CableFAX Daily™

Wednesday — January 12, 2011

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 22 / No. 007

Big Crowd Superiority: ESPN Scores Big With BCS Football

While Auburn won a national championship Mon night, **ESPN** earned an impressive cable title. The net's coverage of the BCS title game turned out to be more eye-catching than losing side Oregon's neon socks, delivering 27.32mln total viewers and 17.72mln homes to smash historical cable records in both metrics. A '09 **MNF** tilt on the sports giant now falls to 2nd all-time (21.84mln, 15.14mln). "We really feel like we're in the cross-hairs of greatness," said ESPN evp, sales and marketing *Sean Bratches* of the net's extensive college football bowl slate that also includes the 4 other majors, the **Rose, Orange, Sugar** and **Fiesta**. And the "impressive" viewership record doesn't hurt either, he said. Despite it, however, many critics lament the title game's move to cable this year after years on broadcast. But while OTA-only homes may have a right to feel aggrieved, the total viewership garnered by ESPN isn't far off from past airings on **ABC** and **Fox**. Yes, the audience dipped approx 11% versus last year (ABC), yet it topped the tallies of 7 of the 10 prior games—and exceeded the 26.56mln avg established over the last 11 seasons. "Avid sports fans reside in the multi-channel environment," said Bratches, noting how three-quarters of broadcast-only homes didn't watch the championship game in '10. "Consumers expect and understand that ESPN is the home of college football." The net also scored well in total viewership for the Rose Bowl (20.56mln), Sugar (13.64mln), Fiesta (10.82mln) and Orange (10.68mln), games that helped the net notch 8 of the top 10 cable telecasts from Dec 27-Jan 2 and 7 of the top 10 from Jan 3-9. That's all gratifying, of course, but Bratches said ESPN's major college football push is about far more than just linear ratings. "From a directional standpoint, I'm very happy where we ended up [vis a vis] advertising and sponsorship," he said of the title and big 4 bowl games. "There was more demand than supply." Ad categories including movie studios and automotive were big players. What helped forge those and other ad/marketing relationships was ESPN's continued focus on multiplatform content, said Bratches, adding that 70% of the net's advertising relationships contemplate more than 1 medium. More than 619K uniques watched the Auburn-Oregon game via **ESPN3.com**, ranking it 4th on the platform's historical list behind 3 **World Cup** matches and well ahead of the previous record for a college football contest, the Rose Bowl's 248K. The site averaged 173K viewers/minute and recorded nearly 42mln consumed minutes. Also a benefit of ESPN's cross-platform approach, said Bratches: generating buzz around and interest in major events

The CableFAXIES awards

DEADLINE: JANUARY 21, 2011

ENTER AT: www.CableFaxiesAwards.com

Entry Questions:

Mary-Lou French at 301-354-1851; mfrench@accessintel.com

Sponsorship Opportunities:

Debbie Vodenos, Publisher at 301-354-1695; dvodenos@accessintel.com
Amy Abbey, Associate Publisher at 301-354-1629; aabbey@accessintel.com

The CableFaxies Awards salute the year's most outstanding communications initiatives and programs in the highly competitive and dynamic Cable arena. The coveted awards set the industry benchmark for excellence across all areas of PR and marketing.

The Winners of the CableFAXIES Awards are from networks, operators, PR firms, vendors, corporations, agencies and other entertainment companies who took chances, made tremendous strides and understand the power of PR and marketing in the cable industry. The winners and honorable mentions will be saluted during an awards event in April 2011 in New York City.

18192

CABLEFAX DAILY (ISSN 1069-6644) is published daily by Access Intelligence, LLC ● www.cablefaxdaily.com ● fax: 301.738.8453 ● Editor-in-Chief: Amy Maclean, 301.354.1760, amaclean@accessintel.com ● Exec Editor: Michael Grebb, 301.354.1790, mgrebb@accessintel.com ● Senior Online Editor: Chad Heiges, 301.354.1828, cheiges@accessintel.com ● Asst VP, Ed Director: Seth Arenstein, 301/354-1782, sarenstein@accessintel.com ● Publisher: Debbie Vodenos, 301.354-1695, dvodenos@accessintel.com ● Assoc Publisher: Amy Abbey, 301.354.1629, aabbey@accessintel.com ● Marketing Dir: Carol Brault, 301.354.1763, cbrault@accessintel.com ● Prod: Joann Fato, 301.354.1681, cdaily@accessintel.com ● Diane Schwartz/VP and Group Publisher ● Subs/Client Services: 301.354.2101, fax 301.309.3847 ● Group Subs: Carol Brault, 301.354.1763, cbrault@accessintel.com

such as the championship game. Think it helped Mon night?

Comcast-NBCU: In an **FCC** filing this week, **Comcast** either outlined new or amplified previous commitments for public benefits that will apply to the transaction. The MSO pledged to deploy improved parental control navigation and advanced filtering tech by the end of '11, develop and deploy a "parental dashboard" feature for its tru2way guide by the end of '13 and enable parents to restrict access to programming based on ratings and "widgets/interactive apps" on future IP-based, Comcast-owned advanced set tops. Also, Comcast will provide 1 additional hour/week of children's educational and info programming on the primary channel of each **Telemundo** O&O station for 3 years following the deal. Comcast and **NBCU** will not insert interactive ads either into broadcast programming for content targeting children 12 or younger or into nets composed of content generally targeting age group such as **Nickelodeon**, **Disney Channel** and **Sprout**. For 5 years, \$15m/yr will be provided in PSAs on literacy, parental controls, **FDA** nutritional guidelines and childhood obesity. And Comcast won't implement a change in the method of PEG channel delivery that results in the degradation of the signal quality or impairment of viewer reception. -- **ACA** urged its membership Tues to co-sign a letter penned by Sen *Al Franken* (D-MN) to the **FCC** and Asst Attorney General *Christine Varney* expressing concern that the Comcast-NBCU deal will lead to less program choice and higher cable and broadband bills for consumers. "This merger will forever alter how Americans access news and information—and absent tough, enforceable conditions, it has the potential to hamper consumers' ability to access video content online," reads the letter, which asks for specific commitments from Comcast and NBCU to prevent the escalation of service rates.

Carriage: **Time Warner Cable** added **WGN America** for digital subs in its East Region/NYC market.

Beta: **ESPN** is the most popular cable net for increased ad spending over the next 12 months, according to a **Beta** study in which ad execs evaluate basic cable and broadcast nets, followed by **Food Net**, **HGTV** and **USA**. Beta said the percent planning to increase ad spending on the avg basic cable net increased from 21% in '09 to 30% in '10. As for nets' provision of innovative multiplatform ad opportunities, **ESPN/ABC Sports** ranked highest, followed by **Discovery Nets**, Scripps Nets the **The Weather Channel**, with the former 2 properties bettering all of the top 4 broadcast nets in the metric. The top 4 in offering a desirable programming environment in which to advertise, including the big 4 broadcasters: **Discovery Channel**, Food Net, ESPN and HGTV.

Science Channel at TCA: It only took a couple minutes for a critic to ask the inevitable question about *Ricky Gervais'* new comedic docu-romp "An Idiot Abroad," which premieres Jan 22 on **Science Channel** and stars Gervais' friend *Karl Pilkington* as a bumbling traveler: Where's the science? "It's very important to us when we took over Science Channel that we show people that science is about curiosity," said Science gm *Debbie Myers*. "It's not about people and scientists in lab coats stuck in a laboratory. It's where you go. It's out there. It's asking killer questions and embarking on that journey and provoking you to think and look at the world in a different way." Time will tell whether critics buy it or not, but one thing was certain: Watching Gervais, Pilkington and co-exec prod *Stephen Merchant* interact about the show had them rolling in laughter. As for Pilkington, it's hard to tell whether he's in on the joke or the butt of it. At one point, Gervais pointed at Pilkington and exclaimed: "How does it function? How has it lived for 38 years. We don't know. Let's ask science."

Starz at TCA: **Starz** pres/CEO *Chris Albrecht* was in a chipper mood as he faced TCA critics late last week. Perhaps he was upbeat since the room was packed, with critics attending Starz' session with enthusiasm and numbers normally reserved for Albrecht's former employer, **HBO**. Starz isn't yet HBO, but its 2010 arguably was its strongest year ever, thanks to breakout series "Spartacus: Blood and Sand" and Golden Globe-nominated mini "Pillars of the Earth." Albrecht immediately said Spartacus will have a season 2, despite the health problems of star *Andy Whitfield*. While a new actor will step into Spartacus's sandals, nobody can "truly replace" Whitfield, Albrecht said. Also up is a Spartacus prequel, "Spartacus: Gods of the Arena" (Jan 21), which takes place 5 years earlier and largely explains how the scheming Gaia and Batiatus became so... scheming. "It was a huge thrill for me," said co-star *Lucy Lawless*. "You get to see the rot set in, and that's always fun to play." In Whitfield's absence, *Dustin Clare* plays the central gladiator Gannicus, who Clare describes as "a self destructive character" with "suicidal tendencies." And then—as if the blood-drenched drama of Spartacus wasn't enough—Starz highlighted another big spectacle drama based on another familiar name: "Camelot" (Apr 1). Writer/producer *Chris Chibnell* told critics he wants to update

the classic tale to take “modern emotional lives and put them in the middle of the myths.” One twist: more of the story spins around Merlin (*Joseph Feinnes*), who guides the young would-be King Arthur into power. “Camelot is all about hope,” he said. “But they’re all subject to the sort of shadows that sometimes creep over that world of hope, and I think that’s what’s engaging.” Interestingly, HBO’s similar dark ages fantasy “Game of Thrones” premieres only 2 weeks after Camelot. Let the war of kings begin... Meanwhile, critics asked whether Starz will stick to serious costume dramas to the exclusion of comedies? “We’re not a very funny group,” Albrecht deadpanned. He said the choice of hour-long dramas works with Starz artistically—they were some of the best scripts Starz received—and financially in that they “travel better” than comedies. Indeed, international sales have been key to Albrecht’s vision for Starz. It’s tough to find 2 comedies that go together to fill an hour, Albrecht added. “And in these early stages... we’re going to concentrate on the hours and fill out the schedule and then see where we get.” But not all Starz fare will deal with ancient history. Upcoming are “Boss” with *Kelsey Grammer* and “Magic City.” The former focuses on Machiavellian politics in Chicago. Magic is set in Miami in the “Mad Men” era. -- The “Torchwood” franchise seen recently on **BBC America** will continue in July on Starz. The title will be “Torchwood: Miracle Day,” exec prod *Russell Davies* announced. The miracle is that one day on Earth nobody dies. That happens for another 5 days and there’s “an instant overnight population boom, where, suddenly the Earth relies on people dying,” Davies said. Davies has a thing about death or at least killing off large numbers of cast members. Previous Torchwoods always had “a high body count because I think it makes the story stronger, more dangerous and more frightening,” he said. True.

HBO at TCA: The comments from *Kate Winslet* (“Mildred Pierce,” Mar 27, **HBO**) about working in television as opposed to films were typical of what TCA critics heard all week. “It never occurred to me... ‘Wow, this is television; therefore, it’s going to be different somehow.’” While she acknowledged working faster on the Pierce 5-part mini than she would for movies, “but the determination and the level of focus... was so much more intense, honestly, than certainly any film I’ve ever been a part of... we were hyper-focused every single day... film schmilm, I’m telling you, television is much harder.” Veteran film director *Todd Haynes* added, “I think the HBO experience was like working with this solid base... headed by incredibly smart people who believed in what we were doing...” Winslet agreed. “I really felt the incredible support of HBO constantly and daily and that really did help us...” -- Before you dismiss *Paul Reubens* or HBO special “The Pee-Wee Herman Show on Broadway” (March premiere), you should know the actor had crusty TCA critics laughing regularly during his session late last week. Asked by a TCA critic if movie offers are coming in, Reubens as Herman answered, “thanks for asking that question, dad.” Will he be on other HBO shows? “Oh, yes, Pee-Wee will make an appearance on ‘True Blood’ and, of course, ‘Hung.’” -- The lone series HBO touted at TCA was not its traditional fare. “Game of Thrones” (April premiere) is set in a violent fantasy kingdom complete with royals, “barbarians, black magic, palace intrigue [and] bloody wars,” says HBO entertainment chief *Sue Naegle*. It’s based on the book “A Song of Ice and Fire” by *George RR Martin*. The series’ cast includes “Lord of the Rings” alum *Sean Bean*. -- TCA took critics from reality TV to a film about the first reality TV experiment. HBO’s “Cinema Verite” (April premiere) is a film about a film, actually a 12-hour film shown in ’73 by **PBS** and known as “An American Family.” HBO’s film follows the making of the PBS doc, with *James Gandolfini* as *Craig Gilbert*, the producer who gets the Loud family to allow cameras into their CA home. It didn’t end well for the Louds, who were ravaged by critics and the public at the time. To prepare for his role, Gandolfini met with the Louds. “What I found fascinating is... how pissed off they still are... after 40 years,” he said. -- HBO film “Too Big to Fail” (spring premiere) recounts the financial crisis of ’08 and features an all-star cast, including *Ed Asner*, *Paul Giamatti*, *Topher Grace*, *William Hurt*, *Cynthia Nixon*, *Bill Pullman*, *James Woods* and *Tony Shalhoub*. Part of the film’s main point is to get inside the crisis’ events and remind the public about the story; “we sometimes have too short a memory,” said *Andrew Ross Sorkin*, The *NY Times* reporter on whose book the film is based. -- HBO’s film based on *Cormac McCarthy*’s 2-man play “The Sunset Limited” (Feb premiere) pairs heavyweights *Tommy Lee Jones* and *Samuel L. Jackson*. Jones also directed the piece and exec produces it. “I always wanted to have control,” Jones jokes. His highly depressed character in the play jokes very little.

Advertising: **GM** partnered with **NBC** to score the exclusive domestic automotive advertising rights for the net’s US coverage of the ’12 London Olympic Games. **Chevy** and **Cadillac** will have a major presence during the event. -- Cox Cross Media and Adify merged to create **Cox Digital Solutions**, which gives national, regional, and local agencies, advertisers and publishers national scale and local engagement in digital media, as well as an MRC-accredited, ad delivery and optimization tech designed to maximize rev. The company offers media placement across 1,300 premium local media sites in 145 key markets.

VOD: **Time Warner Cable** launched on its FVOD platform **ExerciseTV**, which offers more than 200 workouts

BUSINESS & FINANCE

from celebrity trainers. -- Avail-TVN inked a content management and distribution services pact with **Aso Rock Ent** covering transactional on demand movies from Nigeria. **FIOS TV** launched the "Nollywood" category in Dec. -- Additions last year totaling 10mln digital homes in markets served by **Time Warner Cable, Cox** and others pushed **Shalom TV** past the 40mln FVOD home threshold.

Programming: **ABC Family** picked up "The Secret Life of the American Teenager" for a 4th season and "Pretty Little Liars" for a 2nd. -- Programming from **Disney Junior**, which is targeted to replace **Soap-Net** in '12, will launch on **Disney Channel** on Valentine's Day. The block will include 6 new series, including animated feature "Jake and the Never Land Pirates." -- **Comedy Central** and **MTVN** will celebrate the comedy world with "The Comedy Awards," a NYC event that will premiere Mar 26 simultaneously across Comedy, **Spike, TV Land, VH1** and **Nick at Nite**.

On the Circuit: **NAMIC** announced 3 full scholarship opportunities for its Leadership Seminar scheduled for Mar 17-18 in L.A., a gift from Class IX of the **NAMIC Executive Leadership Development Program** to support participation by eligible professionals of color. Scholarship nominations are due Feb 18.

CableFAX Daily Stockwatch

Company	01/11 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	01/11 Close	1-Day Ch
BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS					
DIRECTV:	41.82	0.12	BIGBAND:	2.80	UNCH
DISH:	21.43	0.44	BLNDER TONGUE:	2.42	UNCH
DISNEY:	39.40	(0.1)	BROADCOM:	45.58	(0.13)
GE:	18.63	0.12	CISCO:	20.88	0.09
NEWS CORP:	16.16	(0.19)	CLEARWIRE:	5.76	0.11
MSOS					
CABLEVISION:	33.83	(0.22)	COMMSCOPE:	31.45	0.06
CHARTER:	39.04	(0.11)	CONCURRENT:	4.86	(0.02)
COMCAST:	22.60	(0.12)	CONVERGYS:	13.95	(0.06)
COMCAST SPCL:	21.36	(0.15)	CSG SYSTEMS:	19.37	0.14
GCI:	12.97	(0.13)	ECHOSTAR:	26.70	0.69
KNOLLOGY:	14.61	(0.24)	GOOGLE:	616.01	1.80
LIBERTY CAPITAL:	63.33	(0.66)	HARMONIC:	8.38	(0.07)
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	37.48	0.07	INTEL:	21.05	0.36
LIBERTY INT:	15.94	(0.11)	JDSU:	16.34	(0.12)
MEDIACOM:	8.59	UNCH	LEVEL 3:	1.19	0.07
SHAW COMM:	20.44	0.11	MICROSOFT:	28.11	(0.11)
TIME WARNER CABLE:	66.11	(0.15)	RENTRAK:	28.39	0.34
VIRGIN MEDIA:	25.45	(0.37)	SEACHANGE:	8.94	(0.02)
WASH POST:	430.14	15.14	SONY:	36.36	0.20
PROGRAMMING					
CBS:	19.60	(0.18)	SPRINT NEXTEL:	4.40	(0.18)
CROWN:	2.61	0.05	THOMAS & BETTS:	48.42	0.47
DISCOVERY:	39.95	0.13	TIVO:	10.05	0.12
GRUPO TELEVISA:	25.45	(0.22)	TOLLGRADE:	9.42	0.13
HSN:	28.75	(0.73)	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	27.12	0.06
INTERACTIVE CORP:	29.75	0.07	VONAGE:	3.12	0.12
LIBERTY:	40.11	0.10	YAHOO:	16.58	(0.02)
LIBERTY STARZ:	68.00	0.20	TELCOS		
LIONSGATE:	6.79	0.02	AT&T:	27.91	(0.43)
LODGENET:	4.46	(0.02)	QWEST:	7.28	(0.1)
NEW FRONTIER:	1.78	0.05	VERIZON:	35.36	(0.56)
OUTDOOR:	7.95	(0.02)	MARKET INDICES		
PLAYBOY:	6.11	0.02	DOW:	11671.88	34.43
SCRIPPS INT:	47.72	0.16	NASDAQ:	2716.83	9.03
TIME WARNER:	33.47	0.19	S&P 500:	1274.48	4.73
VALUEVISION:	5.99	(0.13)	TECHNOLOGY		
WWE:	14.02	(0.06)	ADVANTAGE:	3.08	(0.06)
TECHNOLOGY					
ALCATEL LUCENT:	3.07	0.10	AMDOCS:	27.64	0.32
AMPHENOL:	52.39	0.48	AOL:	24.00	(0.07)
AOL:	24.00	(0.07)	APPLE:	341.64	(0.81)
APPLE:	341.64	(0.81)	ARRIS GROUP:	12.07	0.45
ARRIS GROUP:	12.07	0.45	AVID TECH:	17.17	(0.22)
AVID TECH:	17.17	(0.22)			



2010 Best Advice/Motto Series



"You cannot bore people into buying your product."
 — David Ogilvy

Peter Intermaggio
 SVP, Marketing Communications, Comcast

To order your copy of the December 2010 issue of CableFAX: The Magazine please contact clientservices@accessintel.com or 800.777.5006.

www.cablefax.com