

# CableFAX Daily™

Thursday — January 31, 2013

What the Industry Reads First

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## RealScreen: Nets Amping up Unscripted

Perhaps '13 is the year of the unscripted. Nets like **CNN, TBS, TNT, USA** and **Participant TV**, to be launched this summer, are upping the unscripted/non-fiction content in their schedules, execs told the RealScreen Summit audience Wed. The strategy might be particularly important for CNN as it explores outside traditional TV news: The net is going from 0 unscripted to "X" number of shows this year, said *Vinnie Malhotra*, svp, development & acquisitions, **CNN Worldwide**. An upcoming new travel show with *Anthony Bourdain* is a start, and more series are coming in the summer and the Fall, he said. "It's our opportunity to evolve CNN." Unscripted also helps broaden the definition of news, according to Malhotra. He said the net is and will remain focused on reporting news, but unscripted content allows CNN to put more focus on storytelling, which he said will help improve viewer experience. "We hope we can attract non-typical CNN audience (through unscripted programs)." According to Malhotra, he keeps a close eye on unscripted programs including subculture series, more so than traditional news programs from CNN rivals like **MSNBC. USA** is also going from 0, to about 5 unscripted series in '13. "All of us are looking to increase the number of originals across the board," said *Heather Olander*, USA svp, alternative programming. Plus, she noted that unscripted programs generally are cheaper to produce than scripted. As for TBS and TNT, there will be 11 new unscripted series this year with a blend of formats, said *David Eilenberg*, svp, unscripted development. Of course, the integration of unscripted content is "a bit of delicate dance" between keeping the tradition and incorporating new programming, CNN's Malhotra said. As the net focuses on weekend programming and builds on Sun nights, CNN Films joined the documentary fray, transforming itself into another destination for docs, he said, noting the net acquired documentary "Blackfish" at the Sundance film festival. Malhotra said the net seeks content that's journalistic and conveys inside information. As for USA, its "blue-sky" programming model can be extended to unscripted series as well, Olander said. TBS and TNT's content are positive in general so even if some unscripted programs can go darker and edgier, the sense of humor and a reliable charter would always be there, Eilenberg said. Digital is an important component of unscripted programs, or any programs, the execs said. CNN has an active audience who want to engage in various topics, Malhotra said.

## The CableFAXIES awards

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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 May 2013 in New York City.

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"It's the perfect platform to build conversations and promote programs." Digital and traditional TV viewing go hand in hand because "people expect it now," said Orlander. She said a well-executed digital strategy enables self-promotion. As for Participant Media, whose upcoming net targets millennials, success is measured by viewings and social media activities, said *Belisa Balaban*, svp, unscripted programming. The coming cable net will focus on programs that are "credible, disruptive and brave," she said. When the net launches, there will be some "unexpected programs" that are fun, entertaining and proactive and inspiring at the same time. Budget for unscripted can be a tricky topic. For Participant TV, volume is the key for now so "the lower it is the more we can do." "It really depends on formats," Orlander said. It also depends on "how ambitious the project is," Malhotra said.

**Union News:** It's still ugly in Brooklyn. **CWA** sent out a release Wed saying that 23 **Cablevision** workers were "illegally fired after attempting to discuss the lack of good-faith bargaining." The MSO describes it differently, saying a "small number" of Brooklyn techs "refused to work Wed after several requests to return to their jobs." Wed marked the 17th bargaining session between the CWA union and Cablevision mgmt. Jan 21 marked the 1-year anniversary of some 270 employees at Cablevision Brooklyn facility voting to join the union. The milestone is significant because after 1 year, if there is no contract, a minority of workers can file a petition to decertify, and the Labor Board will schedule another vote. Thus far, Cablevision and union leaders have reached a tentative deal on more than 20 contract issues, but more remain, with union reps protesting outside Cablevision's annual Lustgarten event and the MSO filing a lawsuit alleging the union had made "false and defamatory claims" about the speed and quality of Cablevision's Internet service in Brooklyn. Last week, CWA filed unfair labor practice charges alleging bad faith bargaining by CVC. The Brooklyn employees remain Cablevision's only unionized staffers. Cable field service and audit techs in the Bronx voted 74% to 26% against joining CWA Local 1101 in June

**In the States:** **Cox** launched a network of more than 750 WiFi hotspots for its HSD customers in Northern VA. Cox subs have free access to the hotspots as part of their product bundles. Once customers connect to CoxWiFi using a device, the same device will automatically connect for the next 30 days without customers having to re-enter their Cox credentials. In addition, customers can attach 3 devices per user ID and 10 per account at a time.

**At the Portals:** The **FCC's** tentative agenda for Feb's open meeting includes a NPRM to substantially increase the amount of unlicensed spectrum available in the 5 GHz band to accelerate the growth and expansion of new WiFi. The Commission also expects to consider a report and order to improve wireless coverage through the use of signal boosters. -- More details from the **FCC** on its 1st post-Superstorm Sandy hearing next Tues. It will kick off at 9am in Manhattan, with the afternoon session moving to the Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, NJ. The 1st hearing is meant to facilitate a wider national dialogue about the resiliency of communications networks by focusing on the impact of Superstorm Sandy, and help inform recommendations and actions to strengthen wired and wireless networks in the face of such large-scale emergencies.

**RealScreen:** Network and production company execs defended "constructed reality series" at the RealScreen Summit Wed. The reality genre, otherwise known as "faking it," as moderator *Phil Faircolough*, evp, **NHNZ**, suggested, has been popular even as critics express concern about the blurring of lines between reality and drama. If it's produced well and doesn't hurt the entertainment value, it's up to the audience to decide, said *Eric Schotz*, pres/CEO, **LMNO Productions**. Producers can't tell people to do things they don't want to do, said *Jeff Collins*, pres, **Collins Avenue Entertainment**. It's about having great characters, and the authentication of the personalities can't be faked, he said. There's also the economic component, *Howard Owen*, pres, **NatGeo** said. "We are not news channels... People watch TV to be entertained." The bottom line is to entertain, he said. Echoed *Joe Livecchi*, svp, development, **CMT**: "What's important to me is putting on a good show." The reality of "constructed reality" is "you can't invent personality," said *Sarah Weidman*, svp, original programming & development, **Style Network**.

**Programming:** **ESPN** and **Univision Deportes** have shook hands on a deal granting ESPN's English-language nets and digital platforms media rights to Mexico's home FIFA World Cup qualifying matches and intl friendlies. Univision will provide Spanish-language coverage of the Mexican National Soccer Team on broadcast, cable and interactive platforms. The alliance also allows Univision Deportes and ESPN to collaborate on special content focused on the Mexican National Team. The series of 20 matches was to begin Wed with an international friendly in Phoenix vs. Denmark at 10 p.m. ET.

# BUSINESS & FINANCE

-- **TLC** ordered a pilot of "Bakery Go Time" (wt), in which the Cake Boss helps struggling family-run bakeries. Don't know if they're struggling, but may we recommend **CableFAX** fave Canela Bakery and *Rosario Gamboa's* beautiful flower gelatinas? -- **Russell Brand** live? **FX** loves being a risk taker. The net is bringing back "BrandX with Russell Brand" for a new cycle Feb 7, expanding the late night series to an hour in addition to the new live format. Beginning Feb 7, the series will air at 11:30pm after "Totally Biased with *W. Kamau Bell*." It moves to 11pm beginning Feb 28. -- **MTV** is giving pop singer *Ke\$ha* a reality series that will debut in Apr. -- **Animal Planet** announced several pick-ups: "Money Barn," auctioneers scour thousands of barns in search of treasure (Feb premiere), "Swamp'd," revolves around P'Maw's Bait Shack in the small town of Pierre Part (spring) and "Top Hooker," expert fishers split into 2 teams for challenges. -- After more than 2.3mln 25-54s tuned in on New Year's Day for 2 half-hour specials of "Island Hunters," **HGTV** granted an immediate greenlight. Eight eps of the show following homebuyers looking for a slice of paradise on their own private island will debut later this year.

**Editor's Note:** It's your last chance to sign up for Thurs' sure-to-enlighten Webinar on how the cloud and new content navigation is changing the game for everyone. More info: <http://tinyurl.com/a8tpo83>

## CableFAX Daily Stockwatch

Company	01/30 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	01/30 Close	1-Day Ch
<b>BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS</b>					
DIRECTV:	52.22	(0.94)	CSG SYSTEMS:	18.60	(0.33)
DISH:	37.66	(0.28)	ECHOSTAR:	36.64	0.28
DISNEY:	53.79	(0.2)	GOOGLE:	753.83	0.15
GE:	22.23	(0.27)	HARMONIC:	5.19	(0.25)
NEWS CORP:	28.35	0.08	INTEL:	21.37	0.09
<b>MSOS</b>					
CABLEVISION:	15.05	(0.2)	JDSU:	12.40	(0.66)
CHARTER:	81.63	0.13	LEVEL 3:	23.54	(0.01)
COMCAST:	39.03	(0.08)	MICROSOFT:	27.85	(0.16)
COMCAST SPCL:	37.62	(0.17)	RENTRAK:	20.41	(0.55)
GCI:	8.10	(0.29)	SEACHANGE:	11.02	(0.08)
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	68.77	(0.04)	SONY:	14.99	(0.15)
LIBERTY INT:	21.21	(0.07)	SPRINT NEXTEL:	5.65	0.01
SHAW COMM:	23.53	(0.26)	TIVO:	12.51	0.05
TIME WARNER CABLE:	100.70	0.35	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	18.99	(0.23)
VIRGIN MEDIA:	39.56	0.19	VONAGE:	2.51	(0.03)
WASH POST:	384.23	(0.5)	YAHOO:	20.12	0.42
<b>PROGRAMMING</b>					
AMC NETWORKS:	56.84	(0.71)	<b>TELICOS</b>		
CBS:	42.02	(0.1)	AT&T:	34.48	(0.2)
CROWN:	1.85	(0.05)	VERIZON:	43.61	0.11
DISCOVERY:	68.84	0.22	<b>MARKET INDICES</b>		
GRUPO TELEVISIA:	28.46	0.06	DOW:	13910.42	(44)
HSN:	58.89	(0.83)	NASDAQ:	3142.31	(11.35)
INTERACTIVE CORP:	40.93	0.28	S&P 500:	1501.96	(5.88)
LIONSGATE:	18.17	(0.19)			
OUTDOOR:	7.49	UNCH			
SCRIPPS INT:	59.78	0.65			
TIME WARNER:	50.14	0.08			
VALUEVISION:	2.56	0.02			
VIACOM:	62.18	0.70			
WWE:	8.43	0.02			
<b>TECHNOLOGY</b>					
ADVANTAGE:	2.14	(0.01)			
ALCATEL LUCENT:	1.56	(0.14)			
AMDOCS:	35.89	(0.14)			
AMPHENOL:	67.79	0.01			
AOL:	30.28	(0.39)			
APPLE:	456.83	(1.44)			
ARRIS GROUP:	16.48	(0.29)			
AVID TECH:	7.29	(0.03)			
BLNDER TONGUE:	1.40	(0.11)			
BROADCOM:	33.87	0.16			
CISCO:	20.58	(0.2)			
CLEARWIRE:	3.25	(0.09)			
CONCURRENT:	6.12	(0.54)			
CONVERGYS:	16.84	(0.14)			



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## Think about that for a minute...

### What the HEVC?

Commentary by Steve Effros

The world has been breathlessly waiting for years now. The announcement has finally come; the engineers have reached an agreement on "HEVC!" For those of you out of the loop, that's "High Efficiency Video Coding." Excitement!

Now many of you know, I'm sure, that most current transmissions of video are still in "MPEG-2" (aka H.222/H.262). The majority of set top boxes in customers' homes work on MPEG-2 standards. Oh, since we're explaining all the acronyms used today, "MPEG" stands for "Motion Pictures Experts Group." Anyway, without getting into all the incredibly boring details, the engineers in various committees (all with very long acronyms we won't use here) have been working since around 1995 to



set standards for digital transmissions. Starting in 2004, spurred by HDTV, the effort focused on developing more transport efficiency, meaning using better "compression" and delivering a "better" picture, and ultimately "MPEG-4" became widely accepted, but it requires new equipment and/or software. Cable is transitioning to that, now.

But the theoretical need for something "better" can never end, so committees all over the world sought to improve upon the "improved" MPEG-4 (aka H.264) and finally, in January of 2013, we have the announcement of the formal birth of "HEVC".. which some folks have been calling "H.265" for a long time now. Why it wasn't "MPEG-5" and what happened to "MPEG-3" shall go down in the annals of the Byzantine politics of engineers and need not be explored here, lest I get in lots of trouble with various well-meaning geeks.

Anyway, the significance that is being assigned to HEVC is that it's apparently a lot more efficient, and thus uses about half of the data demands placed by H.264 which

in turn did at least the same thing to H.262. MPEG-4, in layman's language, was twice as efficient as MPEG-2, and HEVC is twice as efficient as MPEG-4. Now, go back and read the first sentence of the second paragraph. Despite all this wonderful theoretical advance, most folks have television sets or DVD players or set top boxes that still operate in MPEG-2, and that equipment is going to be around for a long time to come!

The reason I am going in to all this is that it's foreseeable that the consumer electronics folks will now proclaim the wonders of this new standard, say it's the new "efficient" way to view video, in particular, and try to sell you "4K" or even "8K" television sets. Please note, 4K uses four times the bandwidth of the current HDTV signal, and if you've been keeping up, you'll understand that 8K uses twice what 4K does! So even with "HEVC" these new formats that the television set manufacturers want us to spend our money on will require at least twice as much bandwidth!

Of course this fits perfectly with the lobbying efforts of those who insist we need at least "1 Gig" systems everywhere. After all, they can always figure out a way to use more bandwidth!

More, however, is not necessarily better, and if it proves anything, it's that the last thing the government should do is try to "adopt" any of these "standards." This is a never-ending sales job by those who need to keep changing what the public "wants" to justify their business plans. I have nothing against "HEVC" or any other technical improvement, but let's let businesses and consumers decide whether they're worth the price, not some FCC rulemaking proceeding.

The technology will change again before the ink is dry.

*Steve*

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*(Steve Effros was President of CATA for 23 years and is now an advisor and consultant to the cable industry)*

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