

CableFAX Daily™

Tuesday — February 2, 2010

What the Industry Reads First

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A New Reality: Non-Fiction Programming Changing, Growing

From increasing competition among cable and/or broadcast nets to finicky viewers who demand access to content on their own terms, the programming landscape is rife with change. And evidence of this dynamic was everywhere at the Realscreen Summit devoted to non-fiction fare, be it the event's record attendance while many other confabs falter, **NBC's** 1st-time participation or **History** pres/gm *Nancy Dubuc's* audible groan when 3DTV came up during a roundtable discussion. It's not that Dubuc is stubbornly attached to 2D or believes the tech will fail, but simply that "it's something else to deal with" amid turbulent times. "There's a lot of pressure to grow revenue across the board because we're maturing," said Dubuc, noting that net execs must now strike an effective balance between ratings goals, profile-raising projects and avenues for additional monetization. Or, as **Discovery Emerging Networks** evp, programming *Deborah Adler Myers* said, it's now imperative to "think of shows as 360 degree business opportunities." With this overarching thrust prominent in their responses, Dubuc and Adler Myers joined other panelists in spotlighting successful shows they like—with a fun twist that the programs have to air on a competing channel (**History**, **Discovery Channel**, **MTV**, **Bravo** or **NBC**). MTV pres, programming and dev *Tony Disanto* was pleased that "Jersey Shore" was mentioned twice, by Bravo Media evp/gm *Frances Berwick* and NBC Ent evp, alternative programming *Paul Telegdy*. "Pop culture is your greatest engine" in non-fiction programming, said Telegdy, who marveled at the buzz generated by Jersey while underscoring how reality content enjoys a greater cost benefit than do scripted dramas, for example. Disanto said MTV didn't heavily market the show because it wasn't expected to transcend the 12-24 demo, adding that the series could yet become a franchise, a key goal achieved by Bravo's "Real Housewives." Said Berwick of Housewives' various iterations: "shifting friendships and shifting communities... this is what our viewers want. People relate to these characters more and more." Viewers' interaction with and attachment to characters is the driving force behind the success of reality shows, said Berwick, adding that "most people don't care" about production characteristics (ie, scripted, staged, completely real). Telegdy agreed, saying the genre is further aided by its longevity and the masses of people who have already been exposed to it. But while you won't see many docu-dramas on NBC—Telegdy said

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#1 SHOW ON CABLE P18-49 AND P25-54 (BURN NOTICE)
#1 NEW ORIGINAL SERIES (ROYAL PAINS)

characters welcome. 

Source: The Nielsen Company. #1 Claims: (12/28/08-12/27/09), (12/31/07-12/28/08), (1/1/07-12/30/07), L7, (000), P2+, A18-49, A25-54, M-Su 8P-11P vs. All Ad-Supported Cable. Original Series Claims: (12/28/08-12/27/09), L7, (000), P2+, A18-49, A25-54, vs. All Basic Cable. Premiere trackage averages. Subject to qualifications available upon request.

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they haven't fared well on broadcast—Discovery is taking the tackle. “You’ll see more and more of that on Discovery,” said Adler Myers of the genre, in which the flagship net landed a big one with “Deadliest Catch.” By contrast, reality pioneer MTV—wary of the explosion in reality content—is “moving heavily into scripted” programming, said Disanto, noting a focus on comedy, animation and made-for-TV movies. “The key for us is to be creatively diverse.” That objective may be universal among programmers, particularly as lines between distribution players and methods begin to blur. “Now we’re speaking to a much broader audience,” said Dubuc of History, though she could have easily been speaking of cable nets generally. It’s just something else to deal with.

Green Patrol: SCTE is getting greener, launching The Smart Energy Management Initiative to help cable operators leverage the financial and environmental advantages of environmentally friendly strategies (*Cfax*, 2/1). Make no mistake about it though—this is focused on the bottom line. “I am very focused on the material benefit and the impact that can be driven by science,” said SCTE pres/CEO Mark Dzuban. “We’ve separated the feel-good things from what we can actually do.” The initiative is also appealing, he said, to those who philosophically like going green but needed the financials to back it up. SCTE has targeted several areas, including Energy Mgmt processes and products that can reduce current operational costs, Renewable Energy technologies that can benefit ops with ROIs of 3-7 years and Recycling and Recovery techniques that can minimize the disposal of outdated equipment. Examples include delving into the physiology of wind generators to salvaging precious metals found in outdated equipment (like set-tops) at the end of their life cycle. 10 MSOs and various vendors met in Phoenix in Dec to talk about what they’ve done. The first 2010 SEMI event is set for Apr at Comcast Center in Philly.

Programming: DIY’s new series for 2010 include “Turf War,” neighbors compete for the best year on the block, “The DIY Dominator,” pits home improvement professionals against each other, and “Massive Moves,” a look at some of the most dangerous and ambitious building moves ever attempted. -- **Spike’s** newest originals explore little people wrestling (“Half Pint Brawlers”) and the exploits of Brooklyn scrap-metal workers (“Scrappers”). Both will run together as a block premiering in June. -- **Smithsonian Channel** offers a month-long Black History Month tribute, with programming including “Lives That Changed the World: Nelson Mandela” (Sat, 8pm). -- **Comedy Central’s** “Web Soup” returns for a new season Mar 3. -- **MTV** bows original movie “Turn the Beat Around” on Feb 26 (10pm ET). Only the net’s 2nd original movie, the story follows a struggling young dancer who convinces a wealthy nightclub owner to open a new disco club.

Brag Book: E!’s “Live from the Red Carpet” from Sun night’s Grammy Awards was its most watched LRC ever, averaging more than 2.5mln total viewers in its 6-8pm slot—up 63% over 2009 and up 48% in 18-49 (1.4) – **ESPN’s** telecast of the 2010 Pro Bowl averaged 12.3mln total viewers, a 40% increase over its ’09 airing on **NBC** (8.8mln). ESPN said it marked the most total viewers since the 2000 Pro Bowl on **ABC** (13.2mln) and was the most-watched all-star game in cable history.

Marketing: truTV revealed its 1st-ever Super Bowl ad Mon (http://inr.mediaseed.tv/truTV_37290). The Groundhog Day-themed spot features *Troy Polamalu* of the Pittsburgh Steelers and promotes the net’s “NFL Full Contact” (Feb 8, 10pm).

Online: Bravo inked a deal with social media network **Foursquare** as the 1st entertainment property to launch a branded experience on their site.

Advertising: Lifetime has linked up with **Outback** for its 1st custom, co-branded hosted movie night. On Feb 3 and Mar 3, the 9pm movie will be branded as “Outback’s Love Adventurous, Live Adventurous,” featuring dating segments and an instant win sweeps.

Competition: DISH added Hindi ent channel **AAPKA Colors**, a jv of **Viacom** and India’s **Network 18**.

Technology: Motorola has now shipped 100mln digital ent devices worldwide, and plans to continue delivery growth using the premise that age no longer dictates a consumer’s willingness or ability to use media technology or services. -- Provisioning firm **Incognito Software** said it has added CALEA reporting to its Address Commander software, which it will incorporate into its IPv6 demo at **CableLabs’** Winter Conference in Denver on Feb 7-11.

BUSINESS & FINANCE

-- **Insight** deployed **Harmonic's** digital video technologies for an extensive network upgrade, including SD and HD encoders with integrated video/audio re-encoding tech.

Honors: **Comedy Central Records'** release of *Stephen Colbert's "A Colbert Christmas—The Greatest Gift of All"* won a Grammy Sun for Comedy Album of the Year.

Public Affairs: NY schools and non-profits received more than 10,700 free kids' books through the **Verizon Foundation's** recent Season's Readings campaign.

At the Portals: The **Obama Administration** has proposed a \$352.5mln budget for the **FCC** in fiscal '11, including funds to implement the National Broadband Plan and the spectrum inventory initiative. The complete FY '11 budget request is available at www.fcc.gov.

People: Ex-AOL exec **Rob Deichert** joined **Weather Channel** as svp, digital advertising ops. -- **Lee Schlazer**, formerly of **Lifetime**, joined **Tennis Channel** as vp, distribution.

Business/Financial: **Rentrak** completed the purchase of **Nielsen EDI**, a global provider of measurement, info and research solutions for the movie industry, from **The Nielsen Co (Cfax, Dec 16)**. As a result of the acquisition, Rentrak said its Box Office Essentials service now captures theatrical box office results from more than 50K movie screens in 26 countries.

CableFAX Daily Stockwatch

Company	02/01 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	02/01 Close	1-Day Ch
BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS					
BRITISH SKY:	34.46	0.32	AMPHENOL:	40.57	0.73
DIRECTV:	31.44	1.09	AOL:	23.93	(0.04)
DISH:	19.01	0.75	APPLE:	194.73	2.67
DISNEY:	29.52	(0.03)	ARRIS GROUP:	10.29	0.25
GE:	16.25	0.17	AVID TECH:	12.68	0.05
NEWS CORP:	14.71	0.03	BIGBAND:	3.04	(0.1)
			BLNDER TONGUE:	1.09	0.03
MSOS					
CABLEVISION:	26.38	0.74	BROADCOM:	27.51	0.79
COMCAST:	15.94	0.11	CISCO:	22.73	0.26
COMCAST SPCL:	15.32	0.18	CLEARWIRE:	6.85	0.36
GCI:	5.86	(0.07)	COMMSCOPE:	27.55	0.34
KNOLGY:	10.86	(0.06)	CONCURRENT:	4.29	0.04
LIBERTY CAPITAL:	27.23	1.34	CONVERGYS:	10.73	0.03
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	26.01	0.63	CSG SYSTEMS:	19.48	0.07
LIBERTY INT:	10.57	0.19	ECHOSTAR:	19.14	(0.06)
MEDIACOM:	4.32	0.16	GOOGLE:	533.02	3.08
RCN:	10.13	0.32	HARMONIC:	6.04	(0.03)
SHAW COMM:	18.84	0.22	INTEL:	19.61	0.21
TIME WARNER CABLE:	44.43	0.84	JDSU:	8.16	0.30
VIRGIN MEDIA:	15.04	0.85	LEVEL 3:	1.41	0.02
WASH POST:	440.20	5.58	MICROSOFT:	28.41	0.23
			MOTOROLA:	6.33	0.18
PROGRAMMING					
CBS:	13.29	0.36	OPENTV:	1.54	0.01
CROWN:	1.50	0.09	PHILIPS:	30.90	0.66
DISCOVERY:	29.79	0.13	RENTAK:	16.01	(0.7)
GRUPO TELEVISIA:	19.63	0.09	SEACHANGE:	6.47	0.00
HSN:	19.27	0.13	SONY:	34.21	0.98
INTERACTIVE CORP:	20.29	0.21	SPRINT NEXTEL:	3.34	0.06
LIBERTY:	36.41	0.64	THOMAS & BETTS:	34.44	0.68
LIBERTY STARZ:	47.84	0.94	TIVO:	9.09	0.07
LIONSGATE:	5.28	0.08	TOLLGRADE:	6.25	0.03
LODGENET:	5.51	0.04	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	23.92	0.15
NEW FRONTIER:	2.06	(0.05)	VONAGE:	1.44	(0.01)
OUTDOOR:	5.13	0.08	YAHOO:	15.05	0.04
PLAYBOY:	3.19	(0.07)			
RHI:	0.37	(0.03)	TELCOS		
SCRIPPS INT:	43.63	0.93	AT&T:	25.38	0.02
TIME WARNER:	28.05	0.60	QWEST:	4.22	0.01
VALUEVISION:	3.99	(0.13)	VERIZON:	29.61	0.19
VIACOM:	31.07	0.26			
WWE:	16.20	0.20	MARKET INDICES		
			DOW:	10185.53	118.20
TECHNOLOGY					
3COM:	7.48	0.03	NASDAQ:	2171.20	23.85
ADC:	5.46	0.15			
ADVANTAGE:	2.15	(0.02)			
ALCATEL LUCENT:	3.51	0.18			
AMDOCS:	28.70	0.11			

CableFAX

Sales Executive of the Year Awards

saluting cable sales leadership

Questions: Rebecca Stortstrom at
301-354-1610; rebecca@accessintel.com

To Sponsor: Debbie Vodenos at
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EYE ON INNOVATION

Online Sociology

Like many other cable net-related Websites, **Versus.com** and **OutdoorChannel.com** enjoyed notable growth last year. Versus saw uniques jump 74%, page views increase 68% and video usage ramp by 69%, while Outdoor Channel delivered a 136% pop in visits and a 173% surge in page views.

Yet the improvements haven't led to idleness or apathy, or even to incessant celebration and repeated pats on the back. Instead, the sites re-launched in Jan with myriad improvements—from more featured video to enhanced social media functionality—in an effort to stoke greater growth and symbiosis across platforms.

After all, Web offerings seem to attain additional import almost daily, particularly for cable nets as TV Everywhere initiatives are expected to crop up in earnest this year. **HBO.com**, too, recently rolled out a revamped portal to foster consumer engagement with its programming. Indeed, the line separating the victors and also-rans in the digital space has become an extremely fine one. “The winners in this space are those willing to also create the experiences that are not solely dependent on TV programming,” said Versus vp, digital media *Neal Scarbrough*. “Rather than just repurpose what’s on our network, we want to connect our users and give them multiple outlets to express themselves.”

As a result, the new Versus.com revolves around community, offering users the opportunity to join/create groups, add photos, upload videos, or create blogs. Also included are interactive games and a “smack talk” section allowing visitors to espouse or rail against teams or players. “We have users that view, users that do and users that spew,” said Scarbrough. “We look forward to taking care of all of them and generating some new traffic through a two-way social platform that lets them share in the experience... social networking and UGC are must-haves for Versus.com.”

Versus isn't alone in seeking to improve customer en-

gagement with its brand and Website.

As media and ent execs believe mobile/wireless and online streaming will be the primary drivers of rev growth over the next 3 years, according to **Accenture**, those execs cited direct relationships with consumers as critical to remaining relevant in an increasingly competitive digital landscape. The 3 main near-term goals of consumer engagement, said execs, should be to develop new offers, shape content production and gain feedback on the content consumption experience.



“We created a much tighter ecosystem with our viewers. After all, the end-goal is to get them to move from screen to screen to screen,” said Outdoor Channel pres, digital media *Todd Merkow*, noting the net's digital community where users can share tips, photos and video, plus its efforts on

Facebook and **Twitter**. “Together, these social platforms allow us to engage with our avid enthusiasts in a meaningful way and hold a dialogue with them.”

All this is not to say, however, that online video provisioning should be relegated to secondary status. For cable nets, content is still what lures viewers to brands across platforms—and hopefully keeps them there.

Underscoring OutdoorChannel.com's larger and improved online video experience, improved resource destination and stronger ad sales platform, Merkow said “these make for a very integrated promotional platform for the linear channel.” Of new and improved content, Scarbrough said “it is a key difference for Versus.com, which has begun a transition from a limited marketing arm to a site that is focused on content and engagement.”

If the proof is in the pudding, as the old adage goes, then users are fond of Versus.com's fresh flavors. The new site went live Jan 13, and since that date its avg page views/user are up approx 150%, and users' avg time spent on the site has doubled. Yum yum.

-Chad Heiges

TheCableFAXIES

awards

DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 5, 2010

ENTER AT: www.CableFaxiesAwards.com

Sponsorship Opportunities: Debbie Vodenos at 301-354-1695;
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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 2010 in New York City.