

CableFAX Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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No Coda: Nickelodeon's Rough Spell Endures

A broken record continued spinning on **Viacom's Nickelodeon** last quarter, producing the grating sound of -3% domestic ad rev growth for the company's media nets segment. Yet even as Nick's ratings woes worsened in Jan, with total day P2+ falling 23% following an 18% drop last quarter, Viacom pres/CEO *Philippe Dauman* refuses to label the sound a dirge. Whenever a company channel hits a rough spot, "we tackle with more research, more programming, better programming and marketing," he said. "We know how to do this, we've had issues with various networks, and we always turn them around." Dauman still saddles **Nielsen** with most of the blame for Nick's ratings downturn, although he did allow that more new shows on competitive nets didn't help. Nick's responding with 500 eps of original programming this fiscal year, its most ever and repping an approx 30% YOY increase. "We will keep layering on new shows to rebuild our ratings," said Dauman. The overall ad market was hampered last quarter by "significant softness in volume in the scatter market," said Dauman, adding domestic ad rev would've increased by low single digits excluding Nick. But that avowal compares to +9% for the prior quarter and gels with recent laments of late-year ad softness from industry execs—and could portend ad rev declines for other cable programmers as well. Dauman, however, said he's "encouraged by the tone out there in the [ad] market," that scatter pricing's "holding up well" in the current quarter, and Viacom has seen many advertisers return following Nov-Dec absences. Joined by media nets' 16% growth in US affil rev and execs pointing to digital distribution as the key driver—CFO *James Barge* quoted high single digit growth without digital—the Nick discussion included much noise about potential linear viewership declines because of digital. But in specifically addressing Nick content on **Netflix**, Dauman believes there's been "minimal impact." On the site, he added, "the number of Nickelodeon streams was pretty much the same in the summer and fall." Overall, Viacom delivered 3% rev growth and continues to buy back shares at a heady clip (\$1.7bln expected in the 1st half of current fiscal year). But net earnings plummeted more than 60%, and investors weren't quite sure how to react. VIA shares fell 5.5% in early trading before rebounding to close down 1.11%.

Retrans Rumble: **Time Warner Cable** still has no deal with **Cordillera**, whose **NBC**, **CW** and **Telemundo** stations have been dark on the MVPD in Corpus Christi since Dec 13. On Wed, the MSO fired back at the broadcaster's **FCC** petition for finding of bad faith in retrans consent negotiations. TWC said the broadcaster's complaint is "riddled with false allegations, material omissions, and mischaracterizations, and utterly fails to establish that [it] has violated any of the Commission's good faith rules." Among TWC's claims was that it pursued negotiations even though Cordillera initially sought an increase of more than 700% from '11 to '12. The MSO also said it was "deeply ironic" that the broadcaster, who has argued that the FCC should refrain from intervening in pricing disputes between stations and MVPDs, now argues that "the Commission effectively compel TWC to offer more money based on Cordillera's unilateral assertions that supposed 'marketplace' conditions establish an entitlement to dramatic price increases." Bottom line: It doesn't sound especially likely that a deal will be done before Sun's big game. In the meantime, TWC is handing out free digital antennas, and KRISTV.



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com had the Super Bowl blackout as the top story Thurs afternoon. **KZTV.com** reported that a local attorney filed suit against TWC, arguing he wants to make a partial payment of \$50/month (vs \$140/month) because he's not getting all the channels he signed up for. -- The latest retrans spat has **DISH** without New Orleans Fox affil **WVUE**, which went dark on the DBS provider Wed after the 2 couldn't reach a retrans agreement. DISH claims owner WVUE wants a rate increase of more than 300%. On WVUE's Website, the broadcaster declares (in red letters, no less): "While DISH PR efforts might throw around percentages that may or may not be correct, WVUE takes seriously the confidentiality terms of our agreements with DISH and others, and therefore we are not able to even defend ourselves publicly." One figure the broadcaster is talking about is how much it spent to install a transmitter so that everyone in the market can pick up WVUE's signal free over the air. The station said it amounts to \$37 for every DISH sub in the New Orleans DMA.

Advertising: CAB released a voter poll conducted by political pollsters **Peter D Hart Research** that it hopes will help sway some advertising dollars. Among the findings: 7 out of 10 voters prefer cable to broadcast when it comes to receiving political info about candidates and/or issues—whether it's a national or local election. Overall, TV was cited as the greatest influencer on votes (32%), followed by newspapers/magazines (23%), word-of-mouth (18%) and town hall/public meetings (17%). 61% of adults 18-34 said they typically notice political TV ads and that they do a good job reminding them of the upcoming election. 46% of 18-34s vs 36% of adults overall said political TV ads help keep them informed. Similarly, 43% of the demo vs 38% overall said a TV ad has prompted them to go to the Internet for more info on a specific candidate/issue.

In the States: Time Warner Cable announced "Talking Pictures On Demand," a monthly, 30-min roundtable show on current film offerings available on Movies on Demand. The 1st ep features TWC's **NY1** film critic *Neil Rosen*, joined by fellow critics, *Bill McCuddy* of **Forbes.com**, *Thelma Addams* of **AMC**, and *Lisa Rosman* of **Indiewire.com**.

Programming: Bravo picked up a 10th season of "Top Chef" and over the next month is staging casting calls in 6 cities. -- **ABC Family** unveiled part of its new original programming slate, which includes comedy series "Baby Daddy." The half-hour series about a young man who becomes a surprise dad to a baby girl when she's left on his doorstep by an ex is the highest-tested comedy pilot in net history. Other new fare includes reality series "Beverly Hills Nannies" (same production company known for "Real Housewives of Beverly Hills") and holiday movie "The Mistle-Tones" starring *Tori Spelling* and *Tia Mowry*. Meanwhile, "The Secret Life of the American Teenager" was greenlit for a 5th season, taking it into more than 100 eps. -- **TLC** bows 8-ep "My Crazy Obsession" Mar 7 at 10pm. Among those featured are a couple with 5K+ Cabbage Patch Kids and a woman obsessed with the color pink—all the way down to her pink dog. -- **Weather Channel** will add "Ice Pilots" to its primetime lineup Mar 5, 9pm. The docu-series follows what happens when a cargo and transport airline pairs adventurous pilots with aging warplanes in the harsh conditions of Canada's Northwest Territories. -- **TV Land** picked up original sitcom "The Exes" for a 2nd season, set to premiere in June.

PPV: Sat's **UFC** event "UFC 143: Diaz vs Condit" is the 1st PPV presentation of a UFC event in 3D. It's also the 1st-ever 3D PPV from **In Demand**. The bout airs live from Vegas at 10pm ET. The 3D version is \$64.99 vs \$54.99 for HD, \$44.99 for SD.

Deals: Starz Ent inked with **Lionsgate** a multi-year licensing deal covering all Starz platforms and more than 500 LGF movies including "The Expendables" and the *Tyler Perry* movie franchise. The deal marks LGF's 1st long-term library deal with Starz, and analysts note the content will hit Starz after running on **Epix**. -- **Blonder Tongue** completed its \$6.5mln

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acquisition of **R.L. Drake**. The purchase price could increase by up to \$1.5mln based on payments that may be made over the next 3 years if certain financial results are realized.

On the Circuit: Comcast svp, strategic planning **Mark Coblitz** delivers the keynote at **SCTE's Smart Energy Mgmt Initiative Forum** Mar 15 in Philly.

People: Turner evp, ops & strategy **Jim McCaffrey** is stepping down after more than 16 years with the company. In a memo, Turner CEO **Phil Kent** said he has relied on McCaffrey to help negotiate deals, design and implement new models and position the company to navigate and lead change. -- **Joel Gurin**, **FCC** Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau chief, will step down as of Feb 17, with Media Bureau deputy chief **Kris Monteith** to serve as acting bureau chief. -- **Comcast Cable** welcomed **Inder Singh** as svp, finance and strategic planning. -- **Outdoor Channel** tapped **Catherine Lee** as general counsel and upped **David Bolls** to asst general counsel/evp, business and legal affairs.

Public Affairs: We're not sure if **Time Warner Cable NY** has any pull with NYC's official meteorologist groundhog—**Staten Island Chuck**—but it did sponsor Thurs' Groundhog Day ceremony at the Staten Island Zoo in which the animal predicted an early spring. TWC is also sponsoring **Chuck's** home and weather station exhibit located at the Staten Island Zoo's Children's Center.

CableFAX Daily Stockwatch

Company	02/02 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	02/02 Close	1-Day Ch
BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS					
DIRECTV:	44.76	(0.48)	CLEARWIRE:	1.82	0.04
DISH:	28.37	(0.06)	CONCURRENT:	3.58	(0.12)
DISNEY:	38.91	(0.42)	CONVERGYS:	13.40	0.01
GE:	18.75	(0.02)	CSG SYSTEMS:	16.62	0.11
NEWS CORP:	19.61	(0.23)	ECHOSTAR:	27.84	0.68
MSOS					
CABLEVISION:	14.34	(0.2)	GOOGLE:	585.11	4.28
CHARTER:	57.80	(0.48)	HARMONIC:	6.27	(0.06)
COMCAST:	26.69	(0.16)	INTEL:	26.49	(0.06)
COMCAST SPCL:	25.49	(0.2)	JDSU:	12.19	(0.94)
GCI:	10.97	0.31	LEVEL 3:	19.57	0.15
KNOLLOGY:	15.84	0.06	MICROSOFT:	29.95	0.06
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	46.66	(0.15)	MOTOROLA MOBILITY:	38.77	0.10
LIBERTY INT:	17.50	0.12	RENTRAK:	19.16	1.65
SHAW COMM:	19.71	(0.12)	SEACHANGE:	7.26	(0.03)
TIME WARNER CABLE:	74.13	(0.16)	SONY:	17.09	(1.1)
VIRGIN MEDIA:	24.05	(0.18)	SPRINT NEXTEL:	2.21	(0.02)
WASH POST:	382.40	(5.35)	THOMAS & BETTS:	71.31	(0.05)
PROGRAMMING					
AMC NETWORKS:	42.01	(0.94)	TIVO:	10.81	0.12
CBS:	29.10	0.19	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	19.43	0.29
CROWN:	1.22	UNCH	VONAGE:	2.54	0.01
DISCOVERY:	43.70	0.24	YAHOO:	15.72	(0.01)
GRUPO TELEVISIA:	19.81	(0.59)	TELCOS		
HSN:	35.87	(0.42)	AT&T:	29.79	0.19
INTERACTIVE CORP:	46.23	0.45	VERIZON:	37.56	(0.24)
LIONSGATE:	10.37	(0.11)	MARKET INDICES		
LODGENET:	3.43	UNCH	DOW:	12707.08	(9.38)
NEW FRONTIER:	1.08	(0.02)	NASDAQ:	2859.68	11.41
OUTDOOR:	7.13	0.01	S&P 500:	1325.54	1.45
SCRIPPS INT:	42.53	(0.78)			
TIME WARNER:	37.18	(0.51)			
VALUEVISION:	1.57	(0.02)			
VIACOM:	52.36	(0.59)			
WWE:	9.70	0.02			
TECHNOLOGY					
ADDVANTAGE:	2.23	0.03			
ALCATEL LUCENT:	1.86	0.06			
AMDOCS:	29.99	0.22			
AMPHENOL:	54.24	(0.56)			
AOL:	18.24	0.48			
APPLE:	455.12	(1.07)			
ARRIS GROUP:	11.96	0.19			
AVID TECH:	10.15	0.29			
BLNDER TONGUE:	1.39	(0.03)			
BROADCOM:	37.01	(0.12)			
CISCO:	19.80	UNCH			



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Wednesday, March 28, 2012

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Super Sunday

Props to **NBC** for selling out not only its original online ad inventory surrounding its Sun **Super Bowl** stream, but also the additional capacity it added following the online success of Wild Card Sat a few weeks back. The company's ahead of the curve for digital coverage of the big game, to be sure, and data from **IAB** show even the unsurpassed TV viewing magnet, or Super Bowl, isn't immune to the clamoring for complementary content/interaction. Nearly two-thirds of 18-34s say their smartphones will play a key role in experiencing the game, according to IAB, and 41% of SB viewers plan to use their computer for something related to the game ads (ya hear that, **Time Warner Cable** and **History?**). All this doesn't mean the boob tube's getting short shrifted regarding SB idolatry; **ESPN**, **NFL Net**, **NBC Sports Net** and **NBC** have you more than covered. Highlights include: NBC Sports Net's "Costas Tonight: Live from the Super Bowl" (Feb 2, 8-10pm ET), during which the inimitable *Bob Costas* will interview NFL commish *Roger Goodell* and also welcome Cowboys owner *Jerry Jones*, Pats owner *Robert Kraft* and players including *Larry Fitzgerald* and *Philip Rivers*; *Matt Lauer's* interview with *Pres Obama* late Sun afternoon on NBC; *Kurt Warner's* interview with *Eli Manning* within the 3-5:30pm ET window on NFL Net; and a special 4-hour "NFL Sunday Countdown" on ESPN (10am-2pm). As always, expect *Michael Irvin* and *Chris Carter* to talk nonsense. As for the game itself, expect the Giants to slow Terrific Tom with relentless pressure and prevail, 27-23. *CH*

Highlights: "Inside Comedy," Thurs, 11p, **Showtime**. This *David Steinberg*-led interview series displays several sides of its comedian-subjects. *Seinfeld* is insightful, *Chris Rock* serious, *Steve Carell* honest and entertaining. Of course *Larry David* and 84-years-young *Don Rickles* are just downright hilarious. *SA*

Worth a Look: "Dark Minds," Sat, 8a, **Investigation Discovery**. This is an addicting series. It follows writer *M. William Phelps* as he tries to crack cold cases. He's aided by a criminal profiler and a convicted serial killer known as "13." Like *Hannibal Lecter*, 13 actually provides useful insights about his fellow killers. This week Phelps hunts the Eastbound Strangler, who murdered 4 prostitutes in '06 and pointed their bodies east. *SA*

Notable: Yes, it's Super Bowl XLVI, but it's also "Puppy Bowl VIII" (Sun, 3p, **Animal Planet**). *Marjorie Kaplan* re-branded Animal Planet, but thankfully she respected the PB's integrity. This year's tweaks include the Icebreakers Blimp, with hamster pilots and Meep, a bird, who's tweeting throughout the game on his BlackBerry. The piggy pep squad is, er, hamming it up on the sidelines, cheering for Fumble, a Chihuahua/Terrier who collects Bow Wow tunes on his iPawd and Prancer, a Shih-Tzu, who, of course, wants to be on "Dancing with the Stars." There are 60+ pups, a referee, instant replays and plenty of pooch punts. *SA*

Basic Cable Rankings (12/26/11-1/29/12) Mon-Sun Prime		
1	ESPN	2.7 2673
2	USA	2.1 2053
3	DSNY	1.8 1741
4	HIST	1.6 1617
5	TNT	1.5 1531
5	FOXN	1.5 1506
5	TBSC	1.5 1503
8	A&E	1.4 1352
9	FOOD	1.1 1047
10	DISC	1 1020
10	FX	1 974
10	HGTV	1 948
10	LIFE	1 941
10	TRU	1 882
10	DSE	1 72
16	SYFY	0.9 931
16	ADSM	0.9 912
16	FAM	0.9 908
16	MTV	0.9 893
16	TLC	0.9 859
21	AMC	0.8 795
21	BRAV	0.8 737
21	ID	0.8 595
21	NKJR	0.8 594
25	NAN	0.7 741
25	TVLD	0.7 700
25	MSNB	0.7 656
25	CNN	0.7 656
25	BET	0.7 608
30	SPK	0.6 641
30	CMDY	0.6 618
30	VH1	0.6 607
30	EN	0.6 587
30	HALL	0.6 538
30	LMN	0.6 535
36	APL	0.5 524
36	NGC	0.5 414
38	ESP2	0.4 402
38	OXYG	0.4 326
38	OWN	0.4 279
38	WE	0.4 272
38	NKTN	0.4 215
38	HMC	0.4 177
44	HLN	0.3 317
44	TRAV	0.3 305
44	CMT	0.3 290

*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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