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# CableFAX Daily™

Tuesday — April 6, 2010

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 21 / No. 065

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## Waving the Network Flag: Cable Using NASCAR for Promotion, Revenue

Although it goes back a number of years and formerly featured car sponsorships by **Cartoon Net** and even the **FCC**, cable's relationship with **NASCAR** continues to expand. As the list of properties featuring related content includes **Turner**, **Speed**, **Versus** and **BET**, some have turned to car racing for promotional purposes. **Showtime** recently agreed to a title sponsorship this year of what is now the Showtime Southern 500, to be held May 8 at Darlington Raceway in SC. **Showtime Sports** spokesperson *Chris DeBlasio* noted a 2-fold goal: to promote the premium net's new "Inside NASCAR" series and engender deeper recognition of the Showtime brand among a very loyal and passionate NASCAR fan base. The cost (approx \$600K) versus the value offered by the multi-faceted relationship "made perfect sense" to Showtime, said DeBlasio, noting that planned fan engagement methods at the event suggests it "will be 100% successful." Included are autograph signings by Inside talent, giveaways of 50K DVDs featuring the show and VIP tickets for affils. Also, "Showtime's underdeveloped markets align with our stronghold," said **NASCAR Media Group** COO *Jay Abraham* of the South generally. The unit works with media properties to create, produce and sell NASCAR-themed content, and has recently strived "to fit each net's needs and objectives" in order to see its cable relationships flourish, he said. Yet NASCAR's passionate fans remain a key selling point. That characteristic helped attract **Lifetime** for an Apr 3 sponsorship play promoting the Apr 11 return of series "Army Wives," said **Lifetime Nets** co-marketing chief *Lew Goldstein*, as did the play's feature at a race in Nashville. "Our fan base and our numbers in that part of the country are huge," he said, adding that military personnel and women are growing NASCAR enthusiast groups. Army's title and air time were featured on the side of a participating race car, and a branded on-site booth featured 2 NASCAR drivers and show cast members. "It would've been really silly of us to not jump in and make it exciting," said Goldstein of the net's comprehensive activation. "With people camping out in line two hours early, fan turnout to meet the talent was better than we could've expected." Dollars are largely what keeps **Charter** involved with NASCAR. The MSO is an assoc sponsor of a race team and drivers including *Kevin Harvick* at 8-12 races annually, chosen to overlap with its footprint. "Our research shows NASCAR fans are most likely to watch sports and order sports on TV," said Charter svp, ad sales *Jim Heneghan*, who said the base also "indexes highly in consumption of our products, especially video and data." The MSO's sponsorship affords it rights to car signage and spurs service adoption,

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but Heneghan said the real moneymaker is its ability to tap local automobile dealers once annually to shoot spots featuring Harvick and other sponsored drivers. Even in '09 in a down economy and depressed car market, that allowance provided a "healthy return just on our ad ledger alone," he said. Plus, Charter has used drivers to promote its own services in spots.

**Competition:** DISH signed a new multi-year deal with **Windstream**, allowing the 2 to continue to offer customers a discounted bundle of communications and entertainment services. Meanwhile, **Free Press** went after the DSL provider Mon, saying that based on news reports it appears to be intercepting valid search queries entered via the Firefox toolbar, using either deep packet inspection technology or software installed on local computers by Windstream, and redirecting users to a search engine on a Windstream-owned page. "We are still waiting for all the facts to come in, but if initial allegations are true, Windstream has crossed the line and is actively interfering with its subscribers' Internet communications," the group said, repeating its call for strong net neutrality rules. Windstream didn't respond by our deadline.

**New Teammates:** Despite a hefty operational loss from broadcasting the Vancouver Olympics in Feb, **NBCU's** hiring of former **Fox National Cable Nets** evp *David Sternberg* as CEO of **Universal Sports** suggests it's clearly behind Olympics sports and expects further growth. NBC and **InterMedia Partners** partnered with Universal Sports (then the **World Championship Sports Network**) in Jun '08, and the net's distribution has grown from 1.5mln homes to more than 57mln since, including approx 35mln digital homes through affils such as **Comcast** and **Charter**. Also joining the net, as COO, is *Perkins Miller*, who was svp, digital media, NBC Sports and Olympics. Universal Sports' former chmn/CEO *Claude Ruibal* remains chmn, and ex-COO *Carlos Silva* assumes the role of pres, **Universal Sports Properties**, the net's fitness and training business. NBCU retains the broadcast rights to the '12 Summer Games but is not expected to vie for future rights.

**At the Portals:** The **FCC's** Media Bureau rejected a petition from Pan-Asian group the **Mabuhay Alliance** seeking to stop **Comcast-NBCU** merger proceedings until there are widespread public hearings and a formal process to examine diversity implications for Asian Americans and other minorities. The Bureau said that the lengthy pleading cycle for the proposed jv should allow interested parties to raise issues of concern.

**Ratings:** The Yankees and Red Sox opened the MLB season Sun and garnered healthy audiences. **YES'** Yanks telecast earned a 10.01 avg HH rating and 1.09mln avg total viewers, marking the second-highest-rated and second-most-watched regular season live sporting event ever on a NY RSN. **NESN's** Sox coverage, meanwhile, scored a 19.7 HH rating (475K homes) to become the net's highest-rated season opener ever and 5th-highest overall.

**Upfronts:** **USA's** development slate for the '10-'11 season includes pilot scripts from actors *Steve Carell* and *Anthony Edwards* as part of 7 total. Carell's untitled project features a middle-class insurance investigator that ferrets out high-stakes

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# BUSINESS & FINANCE

dramas, and Edwards' "The Velvet Hammer" chronicles the return to Houston of a native and ex-debutante who's now an FBI agent and mother.

**Affiliate Relations:** Rolodex alert: **Fox Cable Networks Affiliate Sales & Marketing** changed its name to **Fox Networks Affiliate Sales & Marketing**, which it says more accurately reflects the breadth of distribution platforms serviced by the group. -- **Outdoor Channel's** "Spring Fever" promo returns in Apr, with on-air spots directing viewers to OutdoorChannel.com for giveaways and newly rebranded **Facebook, Twitter, YouTube** pages.

**People:** Former **Animal Planet** gm **Maureen Smith** was named pres, *The Jane Goodall Institute*. It's familiar territory: Smith worked alongside her "life-long hero," Dr Goodall at Animal Planet to develop and produce docs, including "Jane Goodall's When Animals Talk." -- Well-known cable attorney **Frank Lloyd** retired last week from **Mintz, Levin** after 43 years in communications law. He served as an aide to **FCC** chmn **Charles Ferris** during the *Carter* administration. -- **Cartoon Net** promoted **Tramm Wigzell** vp, action adventure and **Nick Weidenfeld** as vp, comedy development. -- **Gospel Music Channel** announced that **Sophia Kelley** has joined the net as vp, programming. She most recently served as vp, programming digital platforms for **TNT, TBS** and **TCM**. -- **Discovery Channel** appointed as svp, programming **Kevin Bennett**, who replaces **Ken Schwab**.

## CableFAX Daily Stockwatch

Company	04/05 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	04/05 Close	1-Day Ch
<b>BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS</b>					
BRITISH SKY:	37.46	0.20	AMPHENOL:	42.97	0.58
DIRECTV:	34.69	0.42	AOL:	26.14	0.78
DISH:	21.26	0.53	APPLE:	238.49	2.52
DISNEY:	35.22	(0.33)	ARRIS GROUP:	12.32	0.35
GE:	18.53	0.20	AVID TECH:	14.99	1.10
NEWS CORP:	17.41	0.24	BIGBAND:	3.49	(0.06)
<b>MSOS</b>					
CABLEVISION:	25.05	0.53	BLNDER TONGUE:	1.09	0.01
COMCAST:	18.82	0.05	BROADCOM:	34.63	1.48
COMCAST SPCL:	17.94	0.04	CISCO:	26.17	0.34
GCI:	5.95	0.03	CLEARWIRE:	7.20	0.10
KNOWLOGY:	13.71	0.24	COMMSCOPE:	29.67	1.06
LIBERTY CAPITAL:	37.46	0.73	CONCURRENT:	5.65	0.05
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	29.53	0.23	CONVERGYS:	12.57	0.30
LIBERTY INT:	16.01	0.41	CSG SYSTEMS:	21.20	0.20
MEDIACOM:	6.00	0.06	ECHOSTAR:	20.41	0.27
RCN:	15.19	0.04	GOOGLE:	571.01	2.21
SHAW COMM:	19.97	(0.03)	HARMONIC:	6.39	0.07
TIME WARNER CABLE:	53.53	0.05	INTEL:	22.59	0.20
VIRGIN MEDIA:	17.88	0.19	JDSU:	13.01	0.44
WASH POST:	483.00	38.26	LEVEL 3:	1.64	0.02
<b>PROGRAMMING</b>					
CBS:	14.64	0.47	MICROSOFT:	29.27	0.11
CROWN:	1.96	0.02	MOTOROLA:	7.16	0.10
DISCOVERY:	34.11	0.30	PHILIPS:	32.91	0.02
GRUPO TELEVISA:	21.66	0.54	RENTRAK:	21.73	0.23
HSN:	30.55	0.65	SEACHANGE:	7.51	0.26
INTERACTIVE CORP:	22.67	0.15	SONY:	38.57	0.15
LIBERTY:	38.44	0.57	SPRINT NEXTEL:	3.91	0.01
LIBERTY STARZ:	56.02	1.42	THOMAS & BETTS:	40.54	0.70
LIONSGATE:	6.22	(0.03)	TIVO:	16.86	0.02
LODGENET:	7.15	0.07	TOLLGRADE:	6.25	0.00
NEW FRONTIER:	1.99	0.02	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	22.80	0.48
OUTDOOR:	6.50	(0.08)	VONAGE:	1.51	0.14
PLAYBOY:	3.79	0.13	YAHOO:	16.51	0.22
RHI:	0.17	(0.01)	<b>TELCOS</b>		
SCRIPPS INT:	44.57	0.31	AT&T:	26.31	0.20
TIME WARNER:	31.90	0.49	QWEST:	5.25	0.04
VALUEVISION:	3.55	0.11	VERIZON:	31.46	0.18
VIACOM:	37.72	0.76	<b>MARKET INDICES</b>		
WWE:	17.43	0.41	DOW:	10973.55	46.48
<b>TECHNOLOGY</b>					
3COM:	7.75	0.05	NASDAQ:	2429.53	26.95
ADC:	7.49	0.15			
ADVANTAGE:	2.26	(0.03)			
ALCATEL LUCENT:	3.20	0.08			
AMDOCS:	30.52	0.24			

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# EYE ON ADVERTISING

## 'Life' Support

There is indeed "Life" online. In support of the new ground-breaking **Discovery** series, **Yahoo!** staged a campaign that included a home page takeover on premiere day and a Yahoo! Messenger integration through which users could share tune-in messages and videos. "The strategy was all about building media that created curiosity and has the 'wow' factor—getting people to say, 'What is that on my screen? I've never seen that before,'" *Jeff Liang* of media agency PHD, told **CableFAX**. *Mitch Spolan*, VP of North American field sales for Yahoo!, walks contributor *Cathy Applefeld Olson* through the campaign.

### Generally, what is Yahoo! looking for in terms of a network partner?

MS: Our best campaigns are ones that our partners come to us in advance and work collaboratively with us to achieve the most high-impact, unique, highly targeted and strategic campaign.

### How did this partnership with Discovery progress?

MS: We have been working collaboratively with PHD, Discovery and their creative agency [AKQA] since November 2009. The collaboration allowed all three parties to push the envelope in terms of new executions and specifications requirements. PHD and Discovery were very strategic and smart in approaching Yahoo! early in the process and providing clear strategic direction and constant feedback. We were told that we were awarded this campaign because we provided the most unique solutions to the client that captured their strategic direction.

### What was Yahoo's relationship with Discovery prior to the "Life" partnership.

MS: Yahoo! and Discovery have been very strong partners. Nevertheless, Yahoo! had to earn this high-profile campaign. We presented over four rounds of ideas, each incorporating feedback from PHD and Discovery, ultimately resulting in a plan that addressed Discovery's

unique strategic needs. It was a 360 degree effort.

### What does Yahoo! hope to get out of the collaboration?

MS: We had participated in "Planet Earth" in 2008 and we knew that "Life" would take that experience to the next level. Our goal was to convey to Discovery Yahoo!'s ability to develop and support custom executions, breaking traditional boundaries across our entire platform of media offerings. We committed ourselves to pushing the limits for an integrated, customized package that would be as artistically stunning as the series itself, capturing the imagination of audiences even before the series debuted.

### What are some of the specific campaign elements?

MS: The campaign was effective because we were able to deploy a diverse range of tools that, together, captured the beauty and power of "Life." Among these, the campaign's highlights were a Yahoo! home page takeover on the day of the premiere, March 21, including floating elements and gutter designs that remained up all day. These were complemented by use of rich ads in Search, in which video is showcased in the search results when a user queries Discovery "Life," and a Mail Tandem execution in which synched video of a reptile eating a mantis greeted users' welcome mail pages. Additional elements included sponsorship of the NCAA Scoreboard on Yahoo! Sports on March 21, the day of the premiere and right in the thick of March Madness.

### The campaign launched March 20. What kind of feedback have you gotten?

MS: The feedback has been fantastic, and press has been extraordinary because this was a very unique and, most importantly, strategically sound campaign. All parties delivered.

*(Longtime entertainment industry reporter Cathy Applefeld Olson is delighted to be documenting media's wild ride into the 21st century)*



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