

# CableFAX Daily™

Tuesday — April 13, 2010


What the Industry Reads First

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## Back Stateside: Cable Vet Ong Ready to Travel

When **Scripps Nets Interactive** set out to find a new pres for **Travel Channel**, it found someone with more than just a proven track record in cable. Former **National Geographic Channel** chief *Laureen Ong*, who joins the net Apr 19, is also quite the jet-setter, having spent the last 3 years in Hong Kong as COO of **News Corp's STAR**. "I have always been a passionate traveler, especially the last 3 years living in Asia," Ong said. "The ability to take something that I am passionate about and to combine it with other things I love doing, which is building great businesses and great teams, was really an extraordinary opportunity for me." Scripps acquired Travel in Dec and began a nationwide search for a pres, with *Pat Younge* leaving at the end of '09, fulfilling a promise to return to London when his youngest child started high school. The net will continue to be based in Chevy Chase, MD, with Ong already starting the house hunt (she's familiar with the area given that Nat Geo is also DC-based). Scripps is hoping to expand the brand into new ventures within the travel category, similar to what it has done with **Food** and **HGTV**. "What I'm hoping we'll be able to do, similar to what Food Network has done for cooks, is demystify cooking so that more and more people will become avid home cooks just because they've shown them the way to do it. It's the same thing HGTV does for home decorating," Ong said. "Hopefully, what we're going to be able to do is allow people to go, 'Wow, you know what? That's not that difficult to do. Traveling is not that arduous.'" So, does that mean a shift to more how-to programs? "That's a very literal translation of travel. We want to become a destination for travelers, however they define it," she said, adding that includes armchair travelers as well as globetrotters. She'll be building off the strength of what already exists. And what does exist are some of the highest-rated shows in the history of the network, including "Man vs Food." Scripps also named *Jonathan Sichel* as gm of Travel, a new post at the net. As Travel's former svp, commercial affairs and ops, he has served as interim gm since the acquisition by Scripps.

**At Our Deadline:** **Charter's** new head honcho is *Mike Lovett*, who has served as interim CEO since *Neil Smit* departed for **Comcast** in late Feb and as the MSO's evp/COO since '05. Named pres/CEO following a national search, Lovett will also join Charter's board. "Mike has sound strategic vision, strong operational skills and a commitment to leading Charter in delivering an exceptional experience to its customers, making him clearly the best candidate for this position," said Charter chmn *Eric Zinterhofer* in a release. Meanwhile, the MSO said evp/CFO *Eloise Schmitz* will depart the co when



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her contract expires in Jul, but will remain on an interim basis while a replacement search is conducted.

**Conan to Cable:** *Jay Leno's* 10pm failure ultimately became cable's gain, as **TBS** announced that *Conan O'Brien* will host a late-night talk show slated to premiere in Nov after reportedly receiving ownership of the show. Conan's the latest in a veritable conga line of well-known actors/personalities who have moved from broadcast to cable (or are planning to), including *Oprah*, *Martha Stewart* and *Glenn Close*. "In three months, I've gone from network television to Twitter to performing live in theaters, and now I'm headed to basic cable. My plan is working perfectly," said O'Brien in a release. The red-haired one's show will air Mon-Thurs, 11pm-midnight, necessitating the movement of "Lopez Tonight" to the midnight timeslot. TBS said host *George Lopez* personally called O'Brien and asked that he join the net's lineup. As **Turner** execs have argued for months that the CPM ad disparity in favor of broadcast over cable is no longer warranted, O'Brien's arrival will make TBS' weeknight slate look very similar to the corresponding offerings of **NBC**, **CBS** and **ABC**, minus the local news. Who will get the last laugh? And is **Comedy Central**, armed weeknights with "The Daily Show" and "The Colbert Report," smiling or frowning?

**In the Courts:** **Cablevision** has asked the US Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit to review the **FCC's** decision to narrow the terrestrial loophole. In Jan, the FCC voted to allow cable competitors to file complaints at the Commission when they are denied terrestrially delivered sports programming. Cablevision, which has fought to protect the right to withhold content, such as **MSG's HD** signal, from competitors, filed the petition last month. **Verizon**, which wants that MSG HD signal, has requested the right to intervene in support of the FCC.

**NAB Show:** *Gordon Smith's* 1st State of the Industry address as **NAB** pres had its requisite share of cable prods, all focused on the retrans hot potato. "Cable representatives are now trying to position themselves as consumer friendly on Capitol Hill. That's right—the cable guy as the consumer advocate! Folks, you just can't make this stuff up," Smith told **NAB Show** attendees, according to prepared remarks. He said NAB has taken the lead with network partners to ensure that policymakers understand that the retrans consent process is working just as Congress intended. Smith also went after the FCC National Broadband Plan's recommendations for reclaiming some broadcast spectrum. "Broadcasting is not an ATM that can keep spitting out spectrum," he said. Smith is concerned the plan "would yank away more than 1/3" of broadcasters' spectrum for wireless broadband—particularly after broadcasters gave back more than a quarter of the TV spectrum as part of the DTV transition. He questioned how voluntary the spectrum reclamation is when the plan states that gov't's ability to reclaim and re-auction spectrum is "an appropriate tool when a voluntary process stalls entirely."

**Competition:** Starting Jul 18, **DirecTV** will present all 60 HD eps of ex-**HBO** series "The Wire," uncut and commercial free.

**Golf Numbers:** After its Thurs Masters coverage averaged 4.94mln viewers to become the most-viewed golf telecast in cable history, **ESPN** said its Fri coverage joined Thurs' to avg 4.43mln total viewers to become the most-viewed combined 2-round golf telecasts in cable history. 2-round viewers (+29%), HH coverage rating (+29%) and HH impressions (+30%) all grew appreciably versus last yr.

**Programming:** **MTV** and **IAC** unit **Electus** will jointly dev and prod "Pedro & Maria," the 1st-ever interactive, multicultural telenovela. The bi-lingual content will allow the audience to vote and decide on the direction the characters and story lines will take. -- Dr *Dan Riskin* was named host of **Discovery's** 5-year programming event, "Curiosity: The Questions of Life."

**Honors:** **ESPN**, **Time Warner Cable** and **Harpo Productions** will be inducted Wed into the 1st-ever Telly Hall of Fame at the NAB Show. They're being honored for their contribution and award-winning work in the field of film and video productions, commercials and Web video production.

**People:** **Comcast** tapped *Maria Weber* as vp, PR and community affairs for the Indianapolis region. -- **Bravo** named *Jennifer DeGuzman*, formerly of **MTVN**, as vp, communications. -- *Lee Raftery* was promoted to svp, intl marketing for **Comcast Intl Media Group**. -- **Canoe Ventures** CMO *Vicki Lins* was named vice chmn of the co's new advisory board headed by chmn *Jim Garrity*, founder/CEO of **Bellwether Digital Bridge**. -- **Lifetime** evp, ad sales *Debbie Richman* has joined **ABC** as svp, prime sales. -- **Fox Nets Affil Sales and Marketing** tapped *Julie Simon* as svp, advanced services. -- **Rentrak** named *David Paiko* vp, business dev, Home Ent Essentials div. -- *Finn Arnesen* joined **Hasbro Studios** as svp, intl distribution and dev. -- **IFC** and **Sundance Channel** expanded their partnership sales group to include *Vanessa Benfield* as svp, partnership sales and integrated solutions, *Tony Song* as vp, sales and partnerships, and *Ilene Danuff* joins

# BUSINESS & FINANCE

as vp, branded content and integrated solutions. -- **In Demand** appointed *Lauren LoFrisco* svp, affil marketing.

**On the Circuit: Cable Show** attendees and exhibitors are invited to “**NBC Universal Connection**,” a celebration sponsored by NBCU at the Universal Studios Hollywood theme park. It includes a concert by Maroon 5 and park rides such as Shrek 4-D.

**Business/Finance: Cablevision's** busy finance docket includes a planned public offering of \$1bn aggregate principal of sr notes due '18 and '20; a tender offer expiring May 10 on all of its outstanding 8% sr notes due '12; and subsidiary **CSC Holdings'** receipt of required consents to extend the maturity date of its revolver and a portion of its term loans, and also to increase revolver commitments by approx \$410mln with a maturity date of March '15. **Wachovia Securities' Marci Ryvicker** views the moves “as net positives for CVC as they help to lengthen its debt profile.” **Moody's** assigned a 'B1' rating to the MSO's proposed \$1.0bln issuance of sr unsecured notes and revised the rating outlooks of CVC and **Rainbow National Services** to 'positive' from 'stable.' -- **Lionsgate** sent to its shareholders a letter urging ratification of the company's new shareholder rights plan at a May 4 special meeting, and which “strongly recommends” against tendering shares to **Icahn Group's** recent acquisition offer.

## CableFAX Daily Stockwatch

Company	04/12 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	04/12 Close	1-Day Ch
<b>BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS</b>					
BROADCASTERS/DBS/			AOL:	28.11	0.12
BRITISH SKY:	37.66	0.19	APPLE:	242.29	0.50
DIRECTV:	35.30	0.05	ARRIS GROUP:	12.36	(0.09)
DISH:	21.62	(0.15)	AVID TECH:	16.84	0.23
DISNEY:	35.89	(0.33)	BIGBAND:	3.52	0.02
GE:	18.71	0.19	BLNDER TONGUE:	1.07	(0.01)
NEWS CORP:	17.66	(0.16)	BROADCOM:	34.06	(0.22)
<b>MSOS</b>					
CABLEVISION:	25.92	0.22	CISCO:	26.53	(0.07)
COMCAST:	18.63	0.13	CLEARWIRE:	7.02	(0.02)
COMCAST SPCL:	17.81	0.12	COMMSCOPE:	31.46	0.21
GCI:	5.94	0.10	CONCURRENT:	5.92	0.12
KNOLGY:	13.20	(0.57)	CONVERGYS:	12.99	0.17
LIBERTY CAPITAL:	40.15	(0.13)	CSG SYSTEMS:	21.18	0.17
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	29.64	0.38	EHOSTAR:	19.74	(0.14)
LIBERTY INT:	16.36	0.07	GOOGLE:	572.73	6.51
MEDIACOM:	6.18	0.17	HARMONIC:	6.93	0.02
RCN:	15.08	0.01	INTEL:	22.54	(0.01)
SHAW COMM:	19.68	(0.11)	JDSU:	13.56	0.04
TIME WARNER CABLE:	52.74	0.06	LEVEL 3:	1.72	0.04
VIRGIN MEDIA:	17.45	(0.16)	MICROSOFT:	30.32	(0.02)
WASH POST:	492.10	0.10	MOTOROLA:	7.42	0.03
<b>PROGRAMMING</b>					
CBS:	15.20	0.02	PHILIPS:	33.41	0.39
CROWN:	1.89	(0.1)	RENTRAK:	20.28	(0.44)
DISCOVERY:	34.69	(0.14)	SEACHANGE:	7.78	0.01
GRUPO TELEVISA:	21.45	0.10	SONY:	36.54	(0.27)
HSN:	30.70	0.31	SPRINT NEXTEL:	4.15	0.11
INTERACTIVE CORP:	22.90	(0.06)	THOMAS & BETTS:	41.65	0.32
LIBERTY:	38.46	0.02	TIVO:	17.45	(0.15)
LIBERTY STARZ:	55.37	(0.19)	TOLLGRADE:	6.46	(0.28)
LIONSGATE:	6.22	(0.02)	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	22.73	0.21
LODGENET:	6.86	(0.14)	VONAGE:	1.46	0.02
NEW FRONTIER:	2.07	(0.05)	YAHOO:	17.64	0.12
OUTDOOR:	6.89	0.04	<b>TELCOS</b>		
PLAYBOY:	4.10	0.17	AT&T:	26.38	(0.06)
RHI:	0.17	(0.01)	QWEST:	5.39	(0.03)
SCRIPPS INT:	43.77	(0.21)	VERIZON:	29.94	(0.14)
TIME WARNER:	32.70	0.07	<b>MARKET INDICES</b>		
VALUEVISION:	3.38	(0.12)	DOW:	11005.97	8.62
VIACOM:	39.10	(0.67)	NASDAQ:	2457.87	3.82
WWE:	17.22	0.02	<b>TECHNOLOGY</b>		
<b>TECHNOLOGY</b>					
ADC:	7.82	0.02	ADDVANTAGE:	2.38	0.13
ADDVANTAGE:	2.38	0.13	ALCATEL LUCENT:	3.21	0.11
ALCATEL LUCENT:	3.21	0.11	AMDOCS:	30.81	(0.04)
AMDOCS:	30.81	(0.04)	AMPHENOL:	43.48	0.18
AMPHENOL:	43.48	0.18			



Also saluting the Digital Hot List 2010

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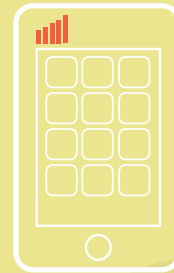
**Special Issue:** Award winners and honorees will be featured in a CableFAX Daily Mid Day Issue: April 28, 2010 and distributed in print at the event and as a special release to CableFAX.com audience.

**Space Deadline: 4/16**

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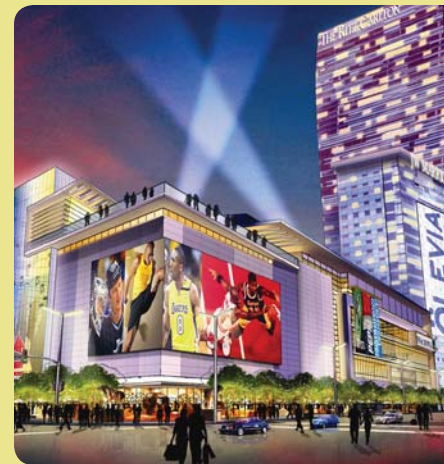
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## EYE ON INNOVATION

### A Different Tune

SWRV didn't write the music network song, it's just trying to gain an audience for its own innovative remix. Or more appropriately, to prove that sweet music can be made by allowing viewers to also serve as programmers and content producers.

Launched in Feb and accessible to 400K Cox homes as of Mar 29, the 24/7 interactive music video net from

**Music Choice** appears prominently positioned at the busy intersection of TV, interactivity, self promotion, empowerment of choice and the viral world. Yet rarely is innovation met with open arms. Instead, skepticism and a wait-and-see approach often reign, at least initially, and so it is with SWRV.

"New music nets have not done well over the last 15 years because they're like wallpaper [and] have had trouble maintaining audiences," said Music Choice pres/CEO *Dave DelBeccaro* in describing SWRV's main obstacle to becoming a smash hit. "But this is an interactive, participatory network, and that's what's different."

Pop music may dominate the SWRV's playlist, but it's the net's target audience of 13-24s that is encouraged to become domineering. By using the Web and mobile handsets, viewers may vote for the feature of specific videos, with voting results and the play of "winning" content occurring in real-time. As videos play, approx 40% of the screen shows info on how to vote, trivia and poll questions, and methods through which viewers can submit comments and pictures.

"In the past, interactivity meant what you want, when you want it," said DelBeccaro. "Now, viewers want to participate in the content and define it."

Take the net's "Vid-ications," for example. The show allows viewers—after determining what videos will soon run—to record and submit dedications that are featured on-screen during the song. Within "Vid-iots," displayed



during music videos are user-submitted videos of people dancing and performing to the corresponding tunes. "It's not just that you're voting on what happens, you're part of the content," said DelBeccaro. "The personality of the net is the expression of individuals."

Myriad personalities can arise during a SWRV feature that allows selected viewers to take over the net for 15min and play their favorite videos with self-made videos/comments as accompaniment. If chosen for

takeover, a viewer's roster of **Facebook** friends is alerted to their forthcoming 15min of fame. "We think this viral aspect will really catch on," said DelBeccaro. "Fortunately, people in their 20s and teens have a cell phone with them at all times."

Employing a distribution model that calls for linear and Web carriage exclusively to affiliates' subs,

SWRV is averaging approx 20K interactions/day through Cox, which will complete a national rollout of the net by Jul 1, said DelBeccaro. The overall goal is a national footprint by '12, he said, and imminent deals with additional MSOs will move the net closer to that realization.

It's too early for comprehensive and actionable usage results, but Music Choice initially projected that 3% of SWRV's audience would interact heavily while 7% would do so occasionally and the remainder, or 90%, would just watch people be, well... Vidiots. After all, and as myriad cable reality programs will inform, "people like to watch train wrecks," said DelBeccaro. But both categories comprising that former 10%, he said, have swelled to become more popular than originally predicted. "TV's going to become more and more engaging," said DelBeccaro, noting that SWRV, in order to capitalize, has to both translate tech trends onto the TV screen and constantly change its shows so that its fickle audience doesn't become bored.

And, of course, prove that SWRV isn't singing the same old music channel song.

—*Chad Heiges*

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