

# CableFAX Daily™

Friday — May 1, 2009

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 20 / No. 082

## Child's Play: Hasbro, Discovery in Sandbox for New Kids' JV

With the news that toymaker **Hasbro** is paying \$300mln for a 50% stake in a **Discovery** jv that includes **Discovery Kids** (approx 60mln HHs), we had more than a few questions for Discovery pres/CEO **David Zaslav**. The net will be renamed (no word on that title yet), and a Website will be launched in late '10. As part of the deal, the jv will receive a minority interest in the US version of **Hasbro.com**. New programming, including live-action and animated, will be based on Hasbro brands such as "Romper Room," "My Little Pony," "G.I. Joe" and "Scrabble," while some Discovery Kids shows (like "Bindi the Jungle Girl") will remain in place. The search for a pres and gm is underway. Discovery will handle ad sales, distribution, origination and other operational requirements for the venture, while Hasbro will provide studio-produced programming. Here are some excerpts from our conversation with Zaslav Thurs. **Discovery has such clout in education. Does teaming up with Hasbro and developing shows that include "My Little Pony" and "Transformers" jeopardize that?** We have a strong educational business. Our primary focus as a company is nonfiction, and in the kids' space, we felt we needed some more help. It's a very competitive space. There are some great competitors in that space that are doing very well. In order to have a stronger voice, we felt like we needed to have a partner that has some brand, marketing reach that could accelerate our growth. **Is there an educational/entertainment split?** There is a split. We're going to have to get a creative team in place to figure out which dayparts and how much of the Discovery educational content we use, and how much entertainment, live action and animation. This is just Day 1. **In the past, you've named nets you want to rebrand, and you've refocused or announced plans for most of those. What's left?** We're focused now on **Military, HD and Fit**. Those channels are all profitable for us. We're thinking about, what are those brands when they are at their best? Is there something else we can do ourselves to drive their growth? **Are you actively out in the marketplace talking to people about them?** It would be more unusual than usual for us to do a jv... Our 1st focus would be to grow our own assets, but if we really think we need a strategic partner, and it's a great fit, we'd consider it. And that's what we've done on this channel, which is the 2nd one we've done that on [the other is the **Oprah Winfrey Net**]. **Distributors are cool with the changes? You haven't had to go back and renegotiate?** Discovery Kids is a kids' net for kids 14 and under. This is a big positive because we're

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going to be investing a lot more money in that vast program description to make hopefully a more compelling channel. All of what we're doing is within the bounds of our program entitlements. **You haven't released a name yet, but do you expect to keep Discovery in the title?** Neither Discovery nor Hasbro will be in the title.

**Comcast Earnings:** During Thurs' conference call, **Comcast** execs offered important perspective on the past (1Q), present (trends) and future (all-digital conversion). About the only quarterly metric for Comcast that differed materially from **Time Warner Cable** concerned basic subs, with the former shedding 78K. But even that number beat Street estimates, and was overshadowed by net adds across HSD (329K), phone (298K) and digital (288K). And then there was the whopping 95% increase in FCF to \$1.4bln, which particularly struck **Sanford Bernstein** analyst *Craig Moffett*. "Falling capital spending, solid cost controls and rising EBITDA compounded to dramatically improve Comcast's cash generation," wrote Moffett, calling the 95% growth Comcast's "headline number." Also of note: business services rev jumped 47%; churn was flat to down across services; advanced services penetration is now more than 47% of digital subs (8.2mln subs receive HD and/or DVR); and expenses largely fell, including with regard to capex (-14%), HSD (-13%) and phone (-16%). Advertising, however, remained a sore spot as local ad rev plunged 25%, and programming ad rev dipped 8%. "We are not seeing any signs of an advertising recovery at this time," said CFO *Michael Angelakis*. Also troubling is a slowing of customer adds in Mar and Apr after improvement in Jan and Feb, and the MSO's "connects have further weakened across all of our service categories," said Angelakis. The problem runs deeper than typical seasonality, said COO *Steve Burke*, noting that effects from the economy, which remains tough, have been choppy and inconsistent. Still, "everything is very marginal in terms of impact," he said. Going forward, Comcast remains excited about the all-digital transition of its footprint, which Burke said will run \$1bln, or less than 10% of a physical rebuild's historical cost. Portland is more than half completed, and the process has so far proven relatively smooth, he said. Highlights include fewer truck rolls, a high rate of customer installs of digital adaptors and higher PPV rev. "The results in Portland have been encouraging enough that we're looking at speeding up our rollout to over half of our footprint by the end of this year," said Burke. Near-term markets for rollout include Atlanta, Baltimore and Philadelphia.

**At Deadline:** **NFL Net** will be carried on **Comcast** after its contract expires with negotiations continuing. "Comcast and the NFL are engaged in productive discussions toward a new agreement for NFL Network carriage on Comcast," the two said late Thurs. "We are both working to find a solution that works for NFL fans and Comcast's customers." The net was slated to pull its signal at midnight Thurs. NFL has balked at Comcast carrying the channel on a sports tier.

**Mignon Who?** As expected, the White House announced late Wed that Pres *Obama* intends to nominate SC PSC member *Mignon Clyburn* to the **FCC** to fill the Democratic seat that will be vacated once *Jonathan Adelstein* is approved to head the **RUS** (*Cfax*, 3/24). Not much is known about Clyburn, daughter of House Majority Whip *James Clyburn* (D-SC). She has been at the PUC for a long time, but her interest has been more in energy issues (Maybe that will make for some small talk with **NCTA** chief *Kyle McStarrow*, a former Deputy Sec of Energy). "Some people say, 'She's a Southern PUC commissioner. She'll automatically be favorably disclosed to the Bells.' I don't know... I've never talked to her, and I don't think a lot of people in Washington have. So it's very, very hard to make a judgment," **Public Knowledge** head *Gigi Sohn* said at **ACA's** forum earlier this week. "All you need is one member of the same party of the chmn who doesn't toe the line and you don't get a whole lot accomplished. So that obviously

**CableFAX Daily** will publish a special supplemental Mid-Day Report, June 11, profiling the winners of the Sales Executive of the Year Awards and the Sweet 16—with special mention of the 2009 Hall of Fame Inductees. For event information and list of Honorees go to: [www.CableFAX.com/SEOY](http://www.CableFAX.com/SEOY).

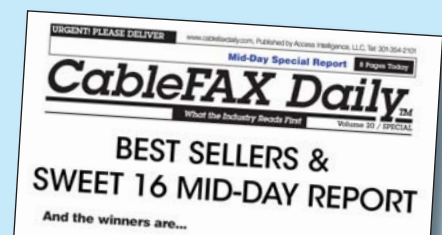
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Artwork Date: June 5



is the big fear.” As usual, the congratulatory announcements poured in Thurs. McSlarrow said Clyburn’s “extensive experience with intergovernmental groups such as **NARUC** will make her an invaluable asset to the Commission.” Her background as a former newspaper publisher should serve her well as she addresses media-related issues at the FCC, **NAB’s David Rehr** added. She will have to be confirmed by the Senate. A Republican commissioner also needs to be named to fill the vacant seat of *Deborah Taylor Tate*. Obama’s pick for FCC chmn, *Julius Genachowski*, also is awaiting confirmation.

**Hulu + Disney:** Disney is joining **NBCU, News Corp** and **Providence Equity Partners** as a jv partner and equity owner in online video aggregator **Hulu**. Reports have it picking up a 30% stake in the venture. The deal will add full-length eps of shows such as **ABC’s “Lost”** and **Disney Channel’s “Phineas and Ferb.”** Disney is only providing select shows, keeping series such as “Hannah Montana” and “Suite Life” to itself. Disney’s take is that Hulu will allow sampling of programming beyond what’s already being done at **ABC.com**. **comScore** found that only about 8% of the ABC.com audience goes to Hulu, while only 13% of the Hulu audience comes to ABC.com. Disney chief *Bob Iger* made headlines at last month’s **Cable Show** by questioning the “TV Everywhere” model, which would limit non-linear programming from cable nets to paying video subs. The deal adds Iger, *Anne Sweeney* and evp, corp strategy/biz dev *Kevin Mayer* to Hulu’s board. Terms weren’t disclosed, but the *WSJ* reports that Disney is contributing capital and marketing dollars in an amount similar to each of NBCU and News, which invested a combined \$100mln.

**Online Video:** “I think we’re excited about certain steps that appear to be something that we’re going to be able to take here, which is to say certain content is now available on [a customer’s] PC, and we will evolve that to other platforms as we grow On Demand Online.” said **Comcast** boss *Brian Roberts* of the MSO’s own “TV Everywhere” concept, which it’s reportedly planning to feature through **Fancast.com** later this year. Echoing common sentiment, Roberts said the key to any online content initiative is to find a provisioning mode that’s “consistent with maintaining the business success of both the content providers and ourselves and other operators, and that’s as consumer-friendly as possible.” Roberts also believes that any such initiative will help promote Comcast’s DOCSIS 3.0 rollout and perhaps drive wideband adoption.

**FCC Overhaul:** Republican **House Commerce** members *Joe Barton* (R-TX) and *Cliff Stearns* (R-FL) introduced a bill Thurs to reform the FCC regulatory process, including allowing the public to see proposed rules and comment before adoption. “Secrecy breeds both inefficiency and distrust, and the FCC already has enough of both,” Barton said. The Commission would have to provide at least 30 days for comments and 30 days for replies on published language of proposed rules. It would have to wait on a decision until at least 30 days after the submission of replies. Lastly, the Commission would have 30 days from adoption to release the text. “The longer it takes for that language to come, the more it begins to look like the decision was not really made when the FCC said it was, but rather ironed out later through last-minute, back-room deals,” Barton said. “Guilty or not, the FCC is widely suspected of changing its mind between decision and regulation.” The infamous 70/70 video competition report was voted on in Nov ’07, but not released until Jan ’09.

**Competition:** **FiOS TV** is offering new releases “Marley and Me,” “Doubt” and “Frost/Nixon” via VOD for \$3 each in May. FiOS now reaches more than 1mln homes in CA after launching 3 years ago, including in 83 cities throughout L.A., Ventura, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino counties. -- **LIN TV** reported a 114% increase in 1Q retrans rev, which helped digital rev, including Internet advertising, rise 82% to \$8.9mln. -- **Belo’s** retrans rev rose 10% to \$9.7mln in the Q.

**Earnings:** **Viacom’s** media nets reported 1Q rev of 1.87 (-8%), hurt by a 9% decrease in domestic ad rev and 11% globally. The company reported a 3% domestic decline in 4Q, but CEO *Philippe Dauman* said the ad market is stabilizing. Affil rev grew 13% on a worldwide basis, and programming expenses rose 3%. Media nets op income fell 9% to \$629mln.



### Awards Breakfast

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8:30am - 10:30am

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## Entry Form

Entry Deadline: May 15, 2009

### MSO AWARDS

- MSO of the Year
- Best Community Service (By An Individual System)
- Best Tech Innovation or Innovator (By Individual System or System-Wide)
- Best Customer Service Innovation (By An Individual System or MSO-Wide)
- Best Commercial Sales Team of the Year
- Project Launch of the Year (could be in sales, technology, community service, customer service, employee relations or anything else; the project must have been launched in calendar year 2008)
- Regional Executive of the Year
- Lifetime Achievement

### INDEPENDENT OPERATOR AWARDS

- Independent Operator of the Year
- Marketer of the Year
- System Executive of the Year
- Strategic Thinker of the Year
- Best Community Service
- Customer Service Innovation or Innovator
- Project Launch of the Year
- Lifetime Achievement

Category details available at  
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**How To Enter:** There is no fee to enter. Use this form or visit [www.CableFAX.com/TopOps](http://www.CableFAX.com/TopOps) for entry form copies, additional category information, and to view the 2008 Winners. Fax or Mail your entries and supporting materials by May 15, 2009 to:

Fax: 301-309-3847 or Mail Entries to:

Mary Lou French  
CableFAX Top Operators Awards  
Access Intelligence  
4 Choke Cherry Rd, 2nd Floor  
Rockville, MD 20850

**What to Enter:** You should submit an essay of not longer than 500 words explaining, with as much specificity as possible, why the candidate or team should be considered. You can supplement your essay with news clips, photos or other materials. When submitting multiple entries please use a separate entry form for each.

Category: \_\_\_\_\_  
Title of Entry: \_\_\_\_\_  
Company: \_\_\_\_\_

### Contact Information *(All Required)*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Company or Agency/Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
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[www.CableFAX.com/TopOps](http://www.CableFAX.com/TopOps)

Winners will be honored in the July 2009 issue  
of CableFAX: The Magazine Top Operators Issue

**CableFAX**  
THE MAGAZINE



# BUSINESS & FINANCE

**Word Weaponry:** Caged together in the NE, Verizon and Cablevision have a history of public spats—over misleading ads, competitive services... and now the MSO's Optimum Online Ultra broadband service offering speeds up to 101/15Mbps. At **PolicyBlog.Verizon.com**, the telco's Eric Rabe calls the service "a parlor trick," claiming it features inferior upstream speeds, won't enjoy much demand, and that Verizon has the capacity to deliver 400Mbps downstream to a single home. "For now, CVC's leap to 101 Mbps is about market positioning and bragging rights rather than delivering a useful service to a mass customer market," wrote Rabe. Countered Cablevision, "faster is faster, bottom line, and we've continued to attract customers and win J.D. Power and Associates' awards as the top broadband provider in our market."

**Honors:** NBCU chief Jeff Zucker and Hulu head Jason Kilar will be honored during a June 9 dinner at Chelsea Piers in NY with the Steven Ross Humanitarian Award and the Rising Leadership Award, respectively, by the UJA Federation. Dinner chairs include Brian Roberts, Rupert Murdoch, Bob Iger and Sumner Redstone. About a week earlier in L.A., ABC Family chief Paul Lee receives the Founders Award from Friends of the Family at the Beverly Hills Hotel. Melissa Joan Hart and Holly Robinson Peete are among the event committee members.

## CableFAX Daily Stockwatch

Company	04/30 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	04/30 Close	1-Day Ch
<b>BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS</b>					
BRITISH SKY:	28.45	1.08	AMPHENOL:	33.84	(0.13)
DIRECTV:	24.73	(0.62)	APPLE:	125.83	0.69
DISH:	13.25	(0.01)	ARRIS GROUP:	10.67	0.56
DISNEY:	21.90	0.89	AVID TECH:	11.07	0.15
GE:	12.65	0.43	BIGBAND:	5.86	(0.17)
HEARST-ARGYLE:	4.50	(0.02)	BLNDER TONGUE:	1.32	0.02
NEWS CORP:	9.12	0.13	BROADCOM:	23.19	(0.37)
<b>MSOS</b>					
CABLEVISION:	17.16	0.20	CISCO:	19.32	0.07
COMCAST:	15.46	0.22	CLEARWIRE:	5.54	0.10
COMCAST SPCL:	14.68	0.35	COMMSCOPE:	25.10	1.49
GCI:	7.66	(0.17)	CONCURRENT:	4.73	(0.22)
KNOLOGY:	7.10	0.27	CONVERGYS:	10.11	(0.06)
LIBERTY CAPITAL:	11.70	(0.63)	CSG SYSTEMS:	14.50	0.53
LIBERTY ENT:	24.35	(0.55)	EHOSTAR:	15.82	0.15
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	16.49	0.28	GOOGLE:	395.97	4.50
LIBERTY INT:	5.30	0.51	HARMONIC:	7.33	(0.17)
MEDIACOM:	5.69	0.64	INTEL:	15.78	0.43
SHAW COMM:	15.42	(0.36)	JDSU:	4.61	(0.96)
TIME WARNER CABLE:	32.23	1.11	LEVEL 3:	1.12	0.05
VIRGIN MEDIA:	7.72	(0.13)	MICROSOFT:	20.26	0.01
WASH POST:	418.59	6.59	MOTOROLA:	5.53	(0.43)
<b>PROGRAMMING</b>					
CBS:	7.04	0.69	NDS:	62.93	0.00
CROWN:	3.09	0.01	OPENTV:	1.47	(0.03)
DISCOVERY:	18.99	(0.28)	PHILIPS:	17.98	0.21
EW SCRIPPS:	1.97	(0.07)	RENTRAK:	9.70	(0.21)
GRUPO TELEVISA:	15.48	(0.57)	SEACHANGE:	6.27	0.09
HSN:	6.91	0.05	SONY:	25.86	(0.28)
INTERACTIVE CORP:	16.02	(0.63)	SPRINT NEXTEL:	4.36	0.12
LIBERTY:	24.89	(0.46)	THOMAS & BETTS:	31.12	1.53
LODGENET:	4.09	0.25	TIVO:	7.50	(0.21)
NEW FRONTIER:	1.96	(0.01)	TOLLGRADE:	5.95	0.19
OUTDOOR:	7.48	(0.16)	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	18.74	(0.14)
PLAYBOY:	3.01	0.16	VONAGE:	0.38	(0.01)
RHI:	3.23	0.08	YAHOO:	14.29	0.27
SCRIPPS INT:	27.44	0.43	<b>TELCOS</b>		
TIME WARNER:	21.83	(0.15)	AT&T:	25.62	0.10
VALUEVISION:	0.72	(0.02)	QWEST:	3.89	0.21
VIACOM:	20.66	(1.08)	VERIZON:	30.34	(0.07)
WWE:	10.70	(0.19)	<b>MARKET INDICES</b>		
<b>TECHNOLOGY</b>					
3COM:	4.05	(0.06)	DOW:	8168.12	(17.61)
ADC:	7.36	0.39	NASDAQ:	1717.30	5.36
ADVANTAGE:	1.75	0.03			
ALCATEL LUCENT:	2.50	(0.05)			
AMDOCS:	20.93	0.17			



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**PROGRAMMER'S PAGE** with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

**Last Year (Big) Brown, This Year Pink**

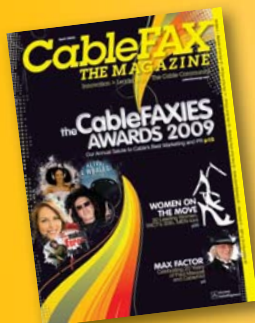
Bravo to **NBCU** and **Churchill Downs** for the female-focus of this year's **KY Derby** festivities. A lamentable pun, yes, as **Bravo** the channel will play a critical and unique role, but a nice contrast to an initiative that should be quite memorable. On May 1 (5-6pm), Bravo will air "Ladies First: Bravo at the Kentucky Derby," a 1-hr special that includes the running of the KY Oaks, the Derby's counterpart race featuring female horses. *Bethenny Frankel* of the net's "The Real Housewives of NYC"—and daughter of famed thoroughbred trainer *Bobby Frankel*—will join *Nancy O'Dell* of **NBC's** "Access Hollywood" in offering a look at the Derby's off-track spectacle. The special's "very focused on women, hats, fashion and a ton of parties," said Bravo gm *Frances Berwick*. "It's about the social aspect of a glamorous, VIP event, and we get to offer a peek inside." The overall goal of Derby stakeholders is to promote the main race among women (there's always a marketing goal), but Berwick feels that Bravo and the most famous horse race in the world form a "perfect combination that doesn't feel forced." A laudable aspect of the special and surrounding festivities is a partnership with the **Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation**. Track patrons on Fri will be required to wear pink clothing or an accessory (expect a plethora of pink-hued millinery), and following the Oaks breast cancer survivors will walk around the Churchill oval, affixing pink ribbons to horses and who knows what else. The net will also feature the walk, which Berwick calls an integral part of "lady's day at the Derby." The "Top Chef" mobile tour bus will also be present Fri, offering culinary creations and a chance for fans to interact with show personalities. Refreshingly, this cross-promotion makes both business and social sense. As for my lady this weekend, she would be fabulous filly Rachel Alexandra (sorry mom). *CH*

**Worth a Look:** "The Fashion Show," pilot, Thurs, 10pm, **Bravo**. The net's response to losing "Project Runway." It's a Runway knockoff, sure, but it's entertaining, mostly due to its talented, mercurial designers. -- "Greensburg," season II premiere, Sun, 9pm, **Planet Green**. It's been 2 years since Greensburg, KS, was leveled by a tornado and decided to rebuild green. Rebuilding requires patience, thus tonight's stories unfold slowly; the best story occurs in China, where an earthquake-ravaged city wants to partner with Greensburg. *SA*

**Notable:** While the **Kentucky Derby** is on broadcast (**NBC**, Sat, 5-7pm ET), there are several cable angles. **ESPN Classic** looks at races from the '80s and '90s (4pm, Fri) and **ESPN** has 5 hours of pre-Derby coverage, beginning Sat at noon ET. As you read above, it's fitting that Fri, Kentucky Oaks Day, Bravo has a 5pm special that includes fashion, food and events related to the new partnership between Churchill Downs and Susan G. Komen for the Cure, the largest breast cancer group. And finally, 3 of the scheduled 20 Derby riders are regulars on **Animal Planet's** reality doc series "Jockeys": (19-year-old *Joe Talamo* on favorite I Want Revenge; *Mike Smith* on Chocolate Candy and *Garrett Gomez* on Pioneer of the Nile). Jockeys recently was renewed; Season II begins in Aug. *SA*

Basic Cable Rankings (3/30/09-4/26/09) Mon-Sun Prime			
1	USA	2.3	2286
2	FOXN	1.9	1807
3	DSNY	1.8	1746
4	TNT	1.5	1511
5	NAN	1.4	1356
6	TBSC	1.3	1318
7	ESPN	1.2	1194
8	A&E	1	1027
8	DISC	1	985
8	FX	1	952
8	SCIF	1	909
8	HALL	1	849
13	TOON	0.9	925
13	LIFE	0.9	915
13	HIST	0.9	912
13	HGTV	0.9	902
13	CMDY	0.9	856
13	TRU	0.9	820
19	SPK	0.8	830
19	FOOD	0.8	778
19	FAM	0.8	777
19	AMC	0.8	755
19	LMN	0.8	557
24	CNN	0.7	732
24	VH1	0.7	726
24	TLC	0.7	688
24	MTV	0.7	672
24	TVLD	0.7	668
24	MSNB	0.7	655
30	BRAV	0.6	545
30	BET	0.6	536
30	NOGG	0.6	441
33	ESP2	0.5	507
33	HLN	0.5	503
33	APL	0.5	438
33	NGC	0.5	337
37	EN	0.4	412
37	TRAV	0.4	344
37	OXYG	0.4	320
37	SOAP	0.4	292
37	WGNA	0.4	249
42	CMT	0.3	290
42	VS	0.3	241
42	WE	0.3	238
42	GSN	0.3	226
42	DXD	0.3	205

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney



**CableFAX**

presents its annual salute to cable's best marketing and PR, the CableFAXIES Awards, and its Leading Women in Cable issue honoring WICT's 30th anniversary.

To read the web version of the magazine go to:  
<http://www.cable360.net/cablefaxmag/>

To see photos from the event go to:  
[http://www.cablefax.com/cfp\\_gallery.htm](http://www.cablefax.com/cfp_gallery.htm)

**Coming in July 2009:  
CableFAX "Top Ops" Issue**