

CableFAX Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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The Why In Syfy: Former Sci Fi Channel Upbeat Despite Fan Concerns

Judging from online reaction to **Sci Fi Channel's** new "House of Imagination" brand video at **SciFi.com**, the net's traditionally passionate fan base continues to hope that Sci Fi's Tues moniker change to **Syfy** is an imagined event. Many fans were skeptical when the net announced rebranding plans in Mar (**Cfax**, 3/17). And then, fresh off its best year ever among 18-49s and 25-54s and a flat 1Q, it saw 18-49 prime viewership fall 17% from Apr-Jun and total prime viewership dip 9%. But Syfy pres *Dave Howe* said the shortfalls stem simply from a dearth of 2Q originals—and even issued a "guarantee" that the net's viewership will rebound to post full-year numbers either comparable to or greater than '08. "We want to embrace the total landscape of the [sci fi] genre," said Howe of the net's programming future, citing content comprised of fantasy, the paranormal, and action-adventure including "everything from Harry Potter to Spider Man to the Transformers." Responsible for much of the net's near-term fate is "Warehouse 13," an original that bows Tues as the "quintessential" Syfy program, said Howe, as well as a "cross-company priority." Spots for the show have appeared across **NBCU** nets, and Howe said **USA** will likely feature the series' pilot going forward. Also slated to help the net skew a little younger (avg age 45), become more upscale and continue to draw additional 18-49s and women: popular show "Eureka," which returns Fri, and the fall bow of "Stargate Universe," and returns of "Sanctuary" and "Scare Tactics." The latter provides some evidence that Syfy's lineup contains "a lot more reality [programming] than several years ago," said Howe, a development that seems to have ruffled some of its traditional fan base. Howe explained, however, that Syfy aims to become a "global lifestyle brand" through appealing content and enhanced digital offerings such as casual games. Now carried in 15 territories outside the US, Syfy hopes for penetration in 50 by the end of '10. "We're incredibly excited about the future," said Howe, and the chance to "build off 16 years of incredible success." If only a time machine born out of a Sci Fi story could help decipher what the next 16 years, or even the next few months, hold for Syfy.

On the Hill: Former **FCC** commish *Jonathan Adelstein's* confirmation hearing to head **RUS** is set for Tues at 10am ET.

Technology: **Time Warner Cable** and **Samsung** have agreed to continue the development, purchase and deployment of tru2way-enabled set-tops, including the first second-source DVR. The pair is also trying to develop better home networking solutions geared toward entertainment. To date, the MSO has deployed more than 2mln tru2way set-tops, including approx 400K from Samsung.

Competition: **DISH** added local HD channels in 4 markets including La Crosse-Eau Claire, WI, bringing to 150 markets and 92% of US homes the availability of such offerings. -- Pittsburgh has a tentative agreement in place for **Verizon** to offer **FiOS** video service to the city. The 10-year agreement still needs the approval of the Cable Advisory Board and City Council before Verizon can take on incumbent **Comcast**.



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Source: Turner Research from Nielsen Media Research data. *A18-49 Q2 2009-to-Date: (03/30/09-06/7/09). Reported data are based on a blend of the most current data available: Final Live+7 (03/30/09-05/24/09), preliminary Live+Same Day (05/25/09-06/7/09). Comedy ranking is based on program name averages for regularly scheduled telecasts for ad-supported cable. *Comedies based on the following NHI codes: Comedy-Other, Comedy-Situation, Comedy-Skits, Comedy-Stand-up, Comedy-Variety, Animation-Adult. TM and © 2009. Turner Broadcasting System, Inc. A TimeWarner Company. All Rights Reserved.

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In the States: **PaidContent** got the rumor mill buzzing by reporting over the weekend that **Sling Media** founder **Blake Krikorian** is allegedly in the running for the **DirecTV** CEO post vacated by **Chase Carey**. **EchoStar** purchased Sling Media in '07. -- The **DOJ** has started an initial review of whether large US telecom companies (specifically **AT&T** and **Verizon**) have abused their marketing power, the **WSJ** reported Mon afternoon. Details were sketchy with the review in its early stages. Lawmakers have made noise in recent weeks over exclusive wireless deals, such as AT&T's exclusive rights to **Apple's** iPhone. -- **Avis Rent A Car** is making **AT&T CruiseCast** available at several of its FL locations, including airport rental spots in Ft Lauderdale, Miami and Orlando. Customers can rent the service, which features 22 premium satellite TV channels and 20 radio channels, for \$8.95/day or \$62.95/week. -- Not surprisingly, **ACA** is trumpeting **SNL Kagan's** projections that retrans revenue will reach \$1.2bln in '11 from \$500mln in '08 (**Cfax**, 7/2) as further evidence as to why Congress should overhaul the retrans consent process. "After looking at both SNL Kagan's new report and **Clarus Research Group's** survey for ACA, any fair-minded person would conclude that these hyper-inflationary spikes in retransmission consent fees take a toll on the smallest operators in the market by depleting resources that are needed to offer customers more affordable advanced services, like HD, and deploy to high-speed broadband services in unserved and underserved areas, a goal of the **Obama Administration**," said ACA's **Matt Polka**. -- **JetBlue** added to its in-flight **DirecTV** programming **MSNBC**, **GoTV** and **Speed**. Also, **TV Land** will broadcast **Setanta Sports** for 48 hours/week.

In the Courts: WV's atty general sued **Comcast**, alleging it violated the state's antitrust act and consumer credit and protection act by forcing subs to lease a set-top to receive premium services, reports the *Mineral Daily News Tribune* (WV).

Marketing: **Taco Bell** is now the official quick service restaurant of the **NBA**, a deal to include a significant presence on NBA coverage from **ABC**, **ESPN** and **TNT**.

Programming: **Kathy Griffin** will host the "**Comedy Central** Roast of **Joan Rivers**," Aug 9, 10pm. -- **TV One** will air live, uninterrupted coverage of Michael Jackson's memorial service Tues, 1pm ET. Journalists **Art Fennell** and **Jacque Reid** will anchor the coverage, which will re-air at 8 and 11pm. **MTV**, **VH1**, **VH1 Classic** and **VH1 Soul** all will go live and commercial free for the service from 1-2:30pm ET. **BET** also will cover Tues' memorial live and will encore its music video tribute (11am ET) and recollections from fans, celebs and people who knew him well (10:30am). In addition, on Aug 1—MTV's 28th b-day—the "M" will stand for "Michael Jackson TV" as the net kicks off a global celebration of his music. -- **Roland Martin** will host a new public affairs series on **TV One** tentatively titled "Washington Watch with Roland Martin." It's set to debut Sept 27 and will air weekly at 11am and 5pm.

Editor's Note: Tues (July 7) is the deadline to nominate your favorite executive for the **CableFAX 100**. Don't miss



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the opportunity to convince us why your exec deserves to be included. Nominations are free. Enter here: <http://www.cable360.net/cablefaxmag/2009cablefax100.html>.

Obit: Cable Pioneer *David Willis* passed away after suffering a stroke. After retiring from **TCI** as dir of engineering, Willis volunteered at the **Cable Center** and was a **SCTE** Hall of Famer.

People: *Steve Cheskin* is leaving **WEtv** to return to **TLC** as evp, programming. He starts Tues and will be based in Silver Spring, MD. Cheskin previously served as gm, **Travel**, interim gm for **TLC** as well as programming vp for **TLC**. -- After serving as **Playboy's** interim CEO for 7 months, *Jerome Kern* resigned from the company's board to pursue other opportunities.

Business/Finance: A US Bankruptcy Court in NY granted final approval for **ION Media Nets'** \$150mln debtor-in-possession financing being provided by a majority of its first lien senior secured lenders. Also, **ION** said it's in active discussions to acquire further content for the '09/'10 TV season, including syndies and originals. -- At last, **Tribune Co** has finalized a deal to sell the **Chicago Cubs**, **Wrigley Field** and a 25% stake in **Comcast Sports-Net Chicago** to the *Ricketts* family, according to reports. The deal must still be OKd by MLB owners and a bankruptcy court.

CableFAX Daily Stockwatch

Company	06/06 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	06/06 Close	1-Day Ch
BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS					
BRITISH SKY:	30.53	0.81	AMPHENOL:	31.74	0.12
DIRECTV:	23.72	(0.27)	APPLE:	138.61	(1.41)
DISH:	15.46	(0.64)	ARRIS GROUP:	11.92	(0.21)
DISNEY:	23.09	0.25	AVID TECH:	12.43	(0.06)
GE:	11.48	0.02	BIGBAND:	4.93	(0.02)
HEARST-ARGYLE:	4.50	0.00	BLNDER TONGUE:	1.26	(0.1)
NEWS CORP:	9.86	(0.12)	BROADCOM:	24.37	(0.75)
MSOS					
CABLEVISION:	18.33	(0.15)	CISCO:	18.53	0.03
COMCAST:	13.90	0.08	CLEARWIRE:	5.49	0.01
COMCAST SPCL:	13.62	0.13	COMMSCOPE:	24.25	(1.69)
GCI:	6.89	0.06	CONCURRENT:	5.40	(0.23)
KNOLOGY:	7.98	0.07	CONVERGYS:	8.76	(0.01)
LIBERTY CAPITAL:	12.07	(0.75)	CSG SYSTEMS:	14.15	0.19
LIBERTY ENT:	25.62	(0.38)	ECHOSTAR:	15.77	(0.06)
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	15.28	(0.12)	GOOGLE:	409.61	1.12
LIBERTY INT:	4.86	0.05	HARMONIC:	5.72	(0.02)
MEDIACOM:	4.56	(0.25)	INTEL:	16.54	(0.18)
SHAW COMM:	16.28	(0.08)	JDSU:	5.13	(0.13)
TIME WARNER CABLE:	30.62	1.03	LEVEL 3:	1.51	0.03
VIRGIN MEDIA:	9.30	0.12	MICROSOFT:	23.20	(0.17)
WASH POST:	355.00	11.75	MOTOROLA:	6.13	(0.06)
PROGRAMMING					
CBS:	6.11	(0.48)	OPENTV:	1.27	(0.01)
CROWN:	1.51	(0.04)	PHILIPS:	18.03	0.38
DISCOVERY:	21.94	(0.14)	RENTRAK:	17.40	1.16
EW SCRIPPS:	2.10	0.22	SEACHANGE:	7.47	(0.38)
GRUPO TELEVISA:	17.05	0.24	SONY:	25.27	0.08
HSN:	9.18	(0.74)	SPRINT NEXTEL:	4.47	0.15
INTERACTIVE CORP:	16.14	0.06	THOMAS & BETTS:	27.39	(0.89)
LIBERTY:	26.63	0.58	TIVO:	9.00	(0.09)
LODGENET:	3.42	(0.07)	TOLLGRADE:	5.25	0.00
NEW FRONTIER:	2.34	0.00	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	19.66	(0.1)
OUTDOOR:	6.10	0.08	VONAGE:	0.36	(0.02)
PLAYBOY:	2.51	(0.09)	YAHOO:	14.91	(0.08)
RHI:	2.97	(0.09)	TELCOS		
SCRIPPS INT:	27.47	0.89	AT&T:	24.80	0.21
TIME WARNER:	24.24	0.03	QWEST:	3.98	(0.13)
VALUEVISION:	1.68	(0.12)	VERIZON:	30.36	0.18
VIACOM:	22.67	(0.43)	MARKET INDICES		
WWE:	12.15	0.04	DOW:	8324.87	44.13
TECHNOLOGY					
3COM:	4.72	(0.03)	NASDAQ:	1787.40	(9.12)
ADC:	7.15	(0.44)			
ADVANTAGE:	1.80	0.00			
ALCATEL LUCENT:	2.21	(0.03)			
AMDOCS:	20.35	(0.36)			

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Source: Mediarmk Research & Intelligence, Doublebase 2008 study, Base of Adults 18+, Index = % of Hallmark Movie Channel Enthusiasts (digitalcable subscribers who watch Hallmark Channel, or who watch, buy or rent family movies) compared to Total U.S.

EYE ON DIGITAL

Slam Dunk...

Yes, **TNT** knows drama. But mounting evidence suggests the net knows a great deal about NBA basketball as well. After *LeBron* and *Kobe* delivered record playoff ratings for the net in May, **comScore's** tally of the month's Web traffic to the most subscribed cable nets proves the fervent fandom bubbled over to **TNT.tv**. The site achieved a whopping 105% jump in May uniques to 1.09mIn, nearly catching its sibling property **TBS.com**, which enjoyed a 20% increase to 1.14mIn. In fact, TNT.tv accounted for more than half of the overall measured properties' uniques improvement, which totaled 194mIn versus 193mIn in Apr. Since inking a deal to operate **NBA.com** in early '08, TNT has become nearly synonymous with league content, and continues to improve related on-air/online synergies. Next up: enticing those fresh TNT.tv uniques to stick around, as the site's avg min/visitor in May fell 27% to 4.8min. **TBS.com's** dipped 2.6% to 5.1min.

Following TNT.tv in unique gains was **C-SPAN.org**, which likely used online coverage of the White House Correspondents' dinner and a busy Capitol Hill docket (**FCC** changes, broadband stimulus, etc) to deliver an 85% increase, to 141K. **Lifetime's** digital properties (+55% to 3.79mIn) and **HGTV.com** (+27% to 4.27mIn) also fared well in boosting uniques, no doubt respectively bolstered by cross-promotion of its linear program-

ming, including Webisodes and full eps, and the premium placed by Americans on home improvement and modifications amid a volatile real estate market. Testament to the latter also resides in **HGTV.com's** 15.7min avg stay, up 20%.

Meanwhile, **Nickelodeon Kids** properties attested to the exploding Web use and savvy of American youth. Grown-up results: the properties garnered 11.58mIn uniques and an impressive avg min/visitor of 67min—well ahead of **ESPN.com** (60min) and 2nd only to **FoxNews.com** (79min). It will be interesting to see if the success continues in Jun.

Among the most consistent online content draws of weather, news and sports, only the former through **The Weather Channel** achieved upticks in both uniques (+1%) and

avg min/visitor (+7%). Mercurial East Coast weather that included a baffling level of rain likely showered the property with gains. Though still leaps and bounds ahead of rival **FoxNews.com** in uniques, **CNN.com's** disappointing May featured dips in both that metric (-6%) and avg min/visitor (-14%). Comparatively, Fox upped its already impressive avg min/visitor by 8%, though the site did see uniques contract by 4%. Perhaps affected by TNT.tv's stellar May, **ESPN.com's** uniques slipped 4%, though its avg min/visitor rose 4%.

Discovery Digital scored a solid 9% rise in uniques to 16.78mIn, helping to offset the 2% metric loss for the 5 most heavily trafficked sites. The bottom 5 properties in uniques, meanwhile, achieved a 30% surge.

(Note: Some nets not included in chart)
- Chad Heiges



comScore Web Box Scores

	Total Unique Unique Vistors (000)	Total Unique Unique Vistors (000)	Total Unique Unique Vistors (000)	Average Minutes Per User	Average Minutes Per User	Total Average Minutes
	Apr-2009	May-2009	% Change	Apr-2009	May-2009	% Change
Total Audience	192,875	193,825	0	1,814.3	1,840.6	1.5
The Weather Channel	40,160	40,634	1	11.0	11.8	6.9
CNN	34,926	32,986	-6	42.7	36.9	-13.6
ESPN	21,384	20,513	-4	57.3	59.5	3.9
MTV Networks Music	18,543	16,875	-9	16.0	12.5	-21.8
Discovery Digital Media Sites	15,412	16,780	9	9.4	9.0	-3.8
Nickelodeon Kids	N/A	11,584	N/A	...	67.2	...
FoxNews.COM	9,033	8,657	-4	73.3	79.4	8.4
FoodNetwork.COM	7,663	6,873	-10	19.6	16.5	-15.8
HGTV.COM	3,361	4,272	27	13.1	15.7	19.6
Comedy Central	4,437	4,082	-8	4.7	5.2	9.3

Data represents the top 10 most trafficked Web sites among the top 20 cable programmers based on the NCTAs rankings

Source: ComScore (www.comscore.com)

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