

CableFAX Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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Twitterpated: New Media Guru Tweets to Customers... And Now to Us

Everyone's trying to figure out how to use **Twitter** these days to help their brand. Amidst all the noise, **Comcast** has emerged as cable's poster child for successfully using the social networking site to reach out to customers and solve problems. It's gotten ink in *BusinessWeek*, *USA Today* and the list goes on. The man leading those efforts is *Frank Eliason*, director of digital care, who manages a team of about 10 and has about 26K followers on Twitter. While we could have interviewed him over the phone, it seemed only fitting to quiz him via Twitter. For those who have resisted taking the Twitter plunge, a few basics: Twitter allows you to follow people and provide updates ("tweets") to all of your followers on whatever you want. You can also send personal messages to Twitter users. The catch? Your updates can't be more than 140 characters, so that explains the abbreviations below between **Cfax** editor *Amy Maclean* (follow her on Twitter @ MACcable and follow Cfax @ CableFAX) and Eliason (@ comcastcares).

MACcable: How many incidents a day does your team handle from the Web?

comcastcares: Can vary dramatically, but we receive 6000 emails a month to my team, on average 250 customers per day on twitter...

comcastcares: We also reach out to 20-50 Customers a day in blogs and 50-100 in forums throughout the net

MACcable: Do you go off the clock at night? I see u on here a lot. Is it hard to walk away?

comcastcares: For any service person it is hard to walk away if you see a Customer in. I love to help Customers

MACcable: I notice you always capitalize the "C" in customer in your responses. You are smooth!

comcastcares: Wow you are quick to pick up on that. I have capitalized the C in Customers for years. There is nothing more important to me

MACcable: Are you the Twitter educator at Comcast? Do you work at getting execs on it?

comcastcares: More than at Comcast. Each week I speak to many companies & events. Twitter is great because of the searchability & timeliness of info

MACcable: Are there drawbacks to Twitter? How do you avoid getting into an altercation on sensitive issues, like network management?

comcastcares: The key is listening to the feedback, acknowledging it and sharing with right people. Many times on that topic it's a misunderstanding...

comcastcares: ...the Customer has a fixable problem. They searched **Google** and concluded trouble was network management. They are happy when it's fixed!

MACcable: But not always, particularly if it's a policy debate vs tech problem. Is there a point when u have to just

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walk away?

comcastcares: I strive to never walk away. When it's an issue like that I will thank them for the feedback and promise to share it.

MACcable: Last Q. Let's role play. Say I tweet: 'Comcast sux. No cable for 3 hours. And it BLOCKS stuff on the web.' What happens?

comcastcares: You would receive a simple response of 'Can I help?' or something similar. This is to offer assistance by throw[ing] ball into their court

(Editor's Note: Thirsty for more Twitter? Stay tuned for Cfax's Aug 13 Webinar on using Twitter for your brand).

Keep Waiving: Cable, not surprisingly, opposes a petition from consumer groups asking the **FCC** to reconsider a decision to grant set-top integration ban waivers to 2 **Evolution Broadband** digital-to-analog converters. "These devices provide a low-cost option for providing digital services to cable customers with analog TV sets and further benefit customers by freeing up cable bandwidth for more high-definition channels, faster Internet speeds and other services," **NCTA** said in a filing Thurs opposing the petition from **Public Knowledge**, **Free Press** and 4 other public interest groups. The groups claim the waiver locks consumers into low-end boxes, harms the retail set-top market and discourages common reliance. They also claim Evolution's waiver opened the gates for others, like **Motorola** and **Cisco**, to apply for similar treatment. NCTA said that the FCC "specifically invited the filing of such requests." **ACA** also chimed in, with pres/CEO *Matt Polka* arguing that the waiver "benefits consumers because they won't need to lease expensive CableCARD set-top boxes to view digital cable programming. If small, independent cable operators are forced to use nothing but CableCARD boxes—which cost hundreds of dollars more per-unit than Evolution's low-cost, limited capability boxes—these providers will have less capital to spend on helping to fulfill the *Obama* Administration's goal of affordable and universal broadband access." ACA was to file comments Thurs.

At the Portals: The **FCC** Enforcement Bureau said late Wed that **Bright House**, **Cox**, **Comcast** and **Time Warner Cable** didn't discriminate against **WealthTV**, and it found no basis for mandating carriage of the indie net. But the buck doesn't stop there. An FCC administrative law judge still has to make his determination after hearing from both sides in Apr. His ruling is expected soon, but even then, the saga's not over. The FCC commissioners have to vote on the ALJ recommendation. Last year, Wealth filed program access complaints against the MSOs claiming they favored now-defunct **MOJO**, an HD channel operated by **In Demand** in which they all have ownership. The Enforcement Bureau, which sent its recommendations to the ALJ, said Wealth failed to show that MOJO was similarly situated to WealthTV, noting that Wealth appeared aimed at a broader audience than MOJO's male target. "While we are disappointed with the Enforcement Bureau's comments, this does not hinder our determination to get a just outcome," said WealthTV CEO *Robert Herring*. "We think that if big cable companies, working together through a co-op like In Demand, withhold 70% of a market from competition, which they did, that is obviously an unreasonable restraint on a programmer's ability to compete fairly, and it is stunning that the Enforcement Bureau did not think so." He said Wealth is confident admin law judge *Richard Sippel* will come to a "just decision," but said the net still wants a chance to present its case to the full Commission. -- The **FCC's** next open meeting will be Aug 27. No word yet on what will make the agenda.

Team Complete: **ESPN's** deal with the **BCS** that includes the TV rights to the college football title game from '11-'13 earned participation from the final player Wed evening when the **Mountain West Conference** ratified related agreements. Though it has no qualms with ESPN's deal per se, the MWC has for months been the most vocal proponent of change to the current BCS system, which it argues unfairly benefits the 6 largest college sports conferences to the detriment of 5 others, including itself. *Pres Obama* has also voiced a desire for systemic change. Additional clout for the argument came Tues from *Sen Orrin Hatch* (R-UT), who reaffirmed his obvious distaste for the BCS during a **Senate** subcmte hearing he spearheaded and that looked at the current system's potential antitrust violations. Hatch even called for the **Justice Dept** to investigate the matter. ESPN declined comment. Meanwhile, 1 day after criticizing the BCS at the hearing, saying "championships should be decided by competition, not by conspiracy," **Univ of Utah** pres *Michael Young* issued a statement after the MWC ultimately assented to the ESPN/BCS accord. "The Mountain West will continue its efforts for change, including a request for dialogue with representatives of the BCS," said Young. For now, though, championship college football rolls unimpeded down the groundbreaking road to cable TV (for more on this issue, see pg 4).

BUSINESS & FINANCE

Deals: TiVo forged a 5-yr pact with Best Buy centered on home-networking marketing and services. The CE retailer will significantly increase promotion of TiVo DVRs within its retail channel, and in turn TiVo will provide Best Buy with a promotional presence on its service as well as continued rev sharing based chiefly on the number of TiVo subscriptions derived from Best Buy sales. Also, the pair agreed to collaborate on integrating existing and future Best Buy digital services on TiVo DVRs and the TiVo service, plus on developing interactive TV apps for potential deployment on future broadband-enabled electronic devices. -- A partnership with Sony will allow Netflix subs to stream movies directly to Sony Bravia Internet video-capable HDTVs.

Competition: DISH added MSNBC HD to its Classic Silver package (with HD) and above. Separately, the DBS op launched local high-def channels in Laredo, TX, and SD local channels in Bend, OR, and Marquette, MI.

Online: Some Starz Ent content will be available to Comcast/Starz subs as part of Comcast's On Demand Online trial with 5K of its subs.

Honors: HBO svp, advanced tech and ops Barbara Jaffe was named winner of the '09 Women In Technology Award, sponsored by Bright House and presented annually at SCTE Cable-Tec Expo (Oct 28-30) by SCTE, WICT and CableFAX sister pub Communications Technology.

CableFAX Daily Stockwatch

Company	07/09 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	07/09 Close	1-Day Ch
BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS					
BRITISH SKY:	31.14	1.24	AMPHENOL:	31.54	0.59
DIRECTV:	23.35	0.16	APPLE:	136.36	(0.86)
DISH:	14.82	0.32	ARRIS GROUP:	11.33	0.17
DISNEY:	22.53	0.29	AVID TECH:	11.46	(0.09)
GE:	10.86	0.15	BIGBAND:	4.47	(0.03)
HEARST-ARGYLE:	4.50	0.00	BLNDER TONGUE:	1.35	(0.05)
NEWS CORP:	9.72	0.15	BROADCOM:	24.31	0.96
MSOS					
CABLEVISION:	17.82	0.20	CISCO:	18.17	0.04
COMCAST:	13.39	(0.11)	CLEARWIRE:	5.55	0.28
COMCAST SPCL:	13.03	(0.21)	COMMSCOPE:	23.75	0.75
GCI:	6.41	(0.23)	CONCURRENT:	5.00	(0.2)
KNOLOGY:	7.58	(0.07)	CONVERGYS:	8.63	0.23
LIBERTY CAPITAL:	11.84	0.59	CSG SYSTEMS:	13.69	(0.15)
LIBERTY ENT:	25.20	0.06	ECHOSTAR:	15.58	0.03
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	15.34	0.70	GOOGLE:	410.39	7.90
LIBERTY INT:	5.00	0.18	HARMONIC:	5.51	0.14
MEDIACOM:	4.23	(0.01)	INTEL:	16.02	0.08
SHAW COMM:	15.55	0.06	JDSU:	5.04	0.19
TIME WARNER CABLE:	29.24	(0.38)	LEVEL 3:	1.40	(0.03)
VIRGIN MEDIA:	9.84	0.64	MICROSOFT:	22.44	(0.12)
WASH POST:	349.73	(4.27)	MOTOROLA:	6.07	(0.02)
PROGRAMMING					
CBS:	5.96	0.18	OPENTV:	1.24	0.00
CROWN:	1.54	0.04	PHILIPS:	18.30	0.78
DISCOVERY:	22.44	0.59	RENTRAK:	16.23	(0.02)
EW SCRIPPS:	2.11	0.02	SEACHANGE:	7.67	(0.19)
GRUPO TELEVISIA:	16.54	0.08	SONY:	24.45	0.05
HSN:	8.47	(0.47)	SPRINT NEXTEL:	4.46	0.17
INTERACTIVE CORP:	15.79	0.10	THOMAS & BETTS:	26.21	0.26
LIBERTY:	25.76	0.09	TIVO:	8.63	0.03
LODGENET:	3.26	(0.11)	TOLLGRADE:	5.11	0.13
NEW FRONTIER:	2.33	0.08	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	18.54	(0.87)
OUTDOOR:	5.91	0.01	VONAGE:	0.34	0.00
PLAYBOY:	2.38	(0.04)	YAHOO:	14.55	0.17
RHI:	2.56	(0.12)	TELCOS		
SCRIPPS INT:	27.24	0.02	AT&T:	23.38	(0.16)
TIME WARNER:	24.00	0.50	QWEST:	3.82	0.14
VALUEVISION:	1.53	(0.21)	VERIZON:	28.64	(0.01)
VIACOM:	21.98	0.19	MARKET INDICES		
WWE:	12.29	(0.03)	DOW:	8183.17	4.76
TECHNOLOGY					
3COM:	4.30	(0.4)	NASDAQ:	1752.55	5.38
ADC:	6.58	(0.02)			
ADVANTAGE:	1.85	0.00			
ALCATEL LUCENT:	2.15	0.10			
AMDOCS:	21.16	0.72			

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PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

Mountain West's Uphill Battle

For the record, I view the **BCS** as a cabal not unlike **OPEC**. Both hold all the aces in their respective domains and operate accordingly. It's difficult to impugn either for operating in a self-interested manner with designs on riches and preservation, however, as even individuals concerned with the well being of others seem a modern day rarity. But like the **Mountain West Conference** and many others (even *Pres Obama*), I want a playoff system to decide college football's champion, something impossible under the current regime. For the uninitiated, here's the gist of the BCS: the 6 "major" football conferences such as the **SEC** and **Big Ten** receive automatic bids to BCS bowls including the title game and are guaranteed \$18mln each/year from BCS-related rev. The other 5, including the MWC, don't have a guaranteed slot and are left to split approx \$10mln unless a team from 1 of the 5 gains a BCS invite, in which case those conferences get to divvy up an additional \$10mln. Sound equitable? And that's not even considering the far more lucrative TV contracts afforded the bigger schools. In fairness, though, major programs steeped in historical success and significance such as Michigan, Nebraska and Alabama have earned certain spoils. But times are changing, evidenced by the rapid and vast improvement of many MWC teams and several undefeated teams from the MWC and WAC that have been snubbed recently in favor of other teams with losses. The main components of MWC's proposal for change: equal representation for all 11 conferences in BCS oversight, which doesn't exist now, and a year-end playoff involving 10 teams. The current system, argues the MWC, resists much needed exposure for rising conferences/schools, implying the delay or prevention of monetary improvement across rev streams. For instance, the MWC's cable channel **The Mtn.** would benefit greatly from more conference exposure. It just received via **Cox** carriage in AZ and Orange County, CA, approx 250K subs outside the conference footprint, a first, but even that's on a sports tier. By contrast, **Big Ten Net** picked up 3mln out-of-footprint subs on **Cablevision**. Obviously, that 'size matters' adage applies. Of course, all the BCS-related wrangling is about money, no matter what side you're on. That's the American way, sporting or otherwise. **CH**

Highlights: "Teddy: In His Own Words," Mon, 9pm, **HBO**. Is it an unbiased love letter to a liberal icon? Yes and no. It's not a critical look at Sen. *Ted Kennedy* (D-MA) or his record. How could it be? The doc is just 90 mins and he's been on the Hill nearly 50 years. And while silent on his alleged womanizing and nearly tacit on alcoholism, it's not a puff piece, devoting time to Chappaquiddick, where Kennedy drove off a bridge and his passenger, *Mary Jo Kopechne*, drowned. He later pled guilty to leaving the scene of the accident. That aside, Teddy's a terrific piece of storytelling and a wonderful pastiche of footage and photographs that liberals will devour and conservatives deplore. And if adult subs can watch it with their teenagers, they'll get a brief but thrilling history of a county and the lone scion of one of its most influential families. SA

Worth a Look: "Entourage," season VI premiere, Sun, 10:30pm, **HBO**. Vince (*Adrian Grenier*) and the boys return, and they're high, thanks to Vince's success with Scorsese, yet the natives are restless. E (*Kevin Connolly*) seeks privacy and Lloyd (*Rex Lee*) seeks recognition. But if we must descend to having unscrupulous agent/motor mouth Ari (*Jeremy Piven*) become the series' moral compass, we're all in trouble. -- "Surprise Vacations with *Karen Duffy*," premiere, Sun, 8pm, **Fine Living**. You have to love the good-hearted nature of this series. Each ep surprises a do-gooder, like a woman who cares for orphans, with a dream vacation. Of course, many decline, saying they're too busy. Too bad—their bags have been packed, as friends/families are in on the surprise. And since it's Fine Living, you know the vacations are extraordinary. -- "Duel in the Sun," Mon, 9pm ET, **Golf Channel**. Cue the bagpipes, it's *Nicklaus* and *Watson*, the '77 Open in Turnberry. A wonderful re-telling of one of golf's great slugfests. Particularly good is *Watson*, whose recall of critical moments is excellent. SA

Basic Cable Rankings			
(6/29/09-7/05/09)			
Mon-Sun Prime			
1	TNT	2.1	2070
2	DSNY	1.9	1867
3	USA	1.8	1793
4	FOXN	1.5	1463
5	NAN	1.3	1269
6	TBSC	1.2	1148
7	CNN	1.1	1081
8	FX	1	955
8	HALL	1	907
10	FOOD	0.9	912
10	DISC	0.9	906
10	HGTV	0.9	883
10	HIST	0.9	854
10	ESPN	0.9	854
10	BET	0.9	765
16	A&E	0.8	828
16	FAM	0.8	817
16	TLC	0.8	810
16	SPK	0.8	798
16	TOON	0.8	791
16	LIFE	0.8	784
16	CMDY	0.8	765
16	SYFY	0.8	761
24	AMC	0.7	700
24	TRU	0.7	670
26	VH1	0.6	590
26	MTV	0.6	578
26	LMN	0.6	427
29	MSNB	0.5	489
29	HLN	0.5	486
29	EN	0.5	465
29	BRAV	0.5	452
29	NOGG	0.5	371
29	OXYG	0.5	355
29	NGC	0.5	334
36	TVLD	0.4	401
36	APL	0.4	396
36	TRAV	0.4	346
36	TV1	0.4	169
40	WE	0.3	255
40	ESP2	0.3	250
40	TVGN	0.3	249
40	CMT	0.3	246
40	WGNA	0.3	236
40	SOAP	0.3	229
40	DXD	0.3	217
40	GSN	0.3	207
40	STYL	0.3	200
40	NKTN	0.3	173
40	ID	0.3	164
40	HI	0.3	148
52	SPD	0.2	182
52	CNBC	0.2	169
52	DHLT	0.2	154
52	GOLF	0.2	154
52	TWC	0.2	151
52	THEN	0.2	133
52	BIO	0.2	131

*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney