

CableFAX Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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EBIF-errific: FiOS TV Launches 1st Major EBIF Trial

Verizon FiOS TV subs in Portland, OR, are getting a little more out of this year's Summer Games. The telco has launched its 1st EBIF trial in the city, teaming with **Ensequence** for an interactive Olympics application. The Portland test is significant for more than just Verizon, as it marks the 1st time an EBIF application has made its way to US consumers, according to *Aslam Khader*, Ensequence's chief product officer. EBIF, or the Enhanced Television Binary Interchange Format, is a standard developed by **CableLabs**. Until **tru2way** is fully implemented in the cable industry, EBIF can be used to offer basic interactive applications on currently deployed/less advanced set-tops. While smaller EBIF trials have been underway with cable operators, the FiOS launch is the 1st to go out widely to consumers, explained Khader. "The implications are that all this work that has gone into EBIF over the last 3 years—starting with CableLabs working with various vendors like ourselves to put the standard in place and then the various MSOs taking the standard and beginning to implement it in their plant—this shows that it is real. EBIF can be used to do the kinds of things the standard was put in place to do," he said. The Ensequence Olympics app on FiOS is running on **MSNBC** and **CNBC**. It allow customers with a standard TV remote to access ITV features such as medal counts by country, bios for athletes, etc. **DISH Network's** Olympic ITV app, also by Ensequence, is similar, but more comprehensive since DISH has a more advanced platform for interactive TV. According to Khader, **NBCU** has reserved the rights to share metrics from both the DISH and FiOS apps, but he described the stats as "record breaking." That would seem to fit with the impressive ratings the Summer Games are garnering for NBC. EBIF is an important standard for the cable industry because it will anchor the early interactive advertising applications for **Project Canoe**, the cable industry's initiative to build a common advertising platform nationally. So given EBIF's importance to cable, why is Verizon the first to launch a significant trial? "Our opinion is that they have an environment that is much more uniform," said Khader. "They don't have as many 3rd parties involved as cable...not as much complexity. It's simpler in some ways because they are a new operator." Cable ops are expected to be a major force behind EBIF as Canoe takes off early next year. "The speed of EBIF deployment is being dictated by the business imperative of Canoe," Khader said.

Waive Wait: By all accounts, the **FCC** is expected to soon approve a blanket waiver for small operators that would exempt them from rules requiring carriage of must-carry broadcasters' digital SD and HD signals along with their analog signals post-transition. But **NAB** isn't giving up on trying to stop it. NAB officials met with FCC staffers this week, warning that such a waiver may necessitate an overhaul of DTV consumer education messages. Since current messaging tells cable subs they don't have to do anything, "consumers who subscribe to cable undoubtedly believe that they will have access to all broadcast signals in digital format after the transition. We explained that this



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message simply will not be true for the millions of cable subscribers who will not have access to any must-carry stations in digital format if a blanket exemption is granted,” NAB said. Cable execs disagreed with NAB’s logic, saying that cable’s messaging—that it has taken care of the transition for customers—is entirely true. Cable TVs from exempted ops will keep working after the transition without any further action by consumers, and there is nothing in cable’s DTV messaging that says customers should expect to receive broadcasters’ digital signal in the exact same format offered by the broadcaster over-the-air, an exec said.

Competition: Following increases in Pittsburgh and NJ, **Verizon FiOS TV** has added 21 nets in Richmond and VA Beach, including 16 HD nets such as **Science HD** and **Smithsonian Channel HD**. -- **AT&T** has expanded **U-verse** Voice availability to include WI cities including Milwaukee, Green Bay and Oshkosh.

In the States: The **TN Technology Corridor Development Authority** has approved **Scripps Nets’** expansion plan in Knoxville that includes a 150K-sq-ft office building to consolidate all the company’s area offices. -- Owing to recent launches in FL, CA, CO, TN and MA, Spanish-language children’s net **Sorpresa** said it counted 1.13mln subs as of May 31, a 25% YOY gain. -- **Charter** has offered free credit monitoring to approx 9K current and former employees after the group’s personal information was attained through a Jul theft of 12 laptops from a company office in SC.

HD: **DirectTV** launched new HD channels overnight Wed, adding 4 new national channels: **ABC Family HD, Planet Green HD, Showtime Extreme HD** and **Showtime Showcase HD**. The bulk of the channel adds were HD PPV channels and 24/7 RSNs, including **FSN Northwest HD** and **SportSouth HD**. -- **Comcast** is adding **AMC HD, Speed Channel HD** and **History Channel HD** in areas around Harrisburg and Hershey, PA. Additional HD nets being added to the lineup include: **Animal Planet HD, Big Ten Network HD, CNN HD, Fox News HD, FX HD** and **NFL Net HD**. The MSO also launched 9 new high-def nets in VT, including **Disney Channel HD, AMC HD** and **Sci Fi HD**.

Decisions, Decisions: **Cablevision** has completed its **Wall St** tour seeking investor input on strategies to increase share value, and a few indications emerged. The MSO won’t immediately pursue any major acquisitions following the purchases of **Sundance Channel** and **Newsday**, according to the *WSJ*. And an analyst for major shareholder **Gabelli & Co** told *AP* that CVC is considering fee-based management of other cable systems. A renewed attempt by the Dolans to take the company private is not expected. Irrespective of management’s choice(s), 1 question remains: Will any tactic spur share value creation equal to that achieved following *Jim Dolan’s* statement of desire to do just that? CVC shares have surged 43% since Dolan’s Jul 31 statement.

Obama Covered: *Jack Tripper* 1st argued that “Three’s Company” before asserting that “Three’s A Crowd,” but which claim will play out at the **Democratic Natl Convention** (Aug 25-28). As **Comcast** is the DNC’s official cable TV/VOD provider and **DISH** its official HD satellite TV service provider, **Qwest** is now busy touting its own role as the event’s official telecom provider. Talk about a democratic dispersal of communications! The telco has installed video equipment with capacity to handle 130 simultaneous video feeds at both the **Pepsi Center** and **Invesco Field at Mile High**, and added approx 2.6K additional data lines and 3.4 voice grade circuits to serve both venues.

VOD: **Warner Bros** rolled out Thurs on the VOD systems of **Time Warner Cable, Comcast, Cox** and **Charter** 85 classic films, many in HD. Included in WB’s 85th anniversary promotion, also available through **DirectTV** and **DISH**,



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* Source: Simmons National Consumer Study Fall 2005 vs. Fall 2007. Read: “The number of Adults 55+ who have a cable modem at home has grown +45% in the last 2 years, while Adults 18-54 show only 24% growth in this area.”

BUSINESS & FINANCE

are "Doctor Zhivago," "Chariots of Fire" and "A Clockwork Orange."

-- Offering downloads via a \$300 broadband-connected set top, on demand movie service **Vudu** has bowed a summer promotion featuring 99-cent SD rentals (\$1.99 HD) of 99 new and classic films. The company counts content deals with **Disney, Lionsgate, New Line, Paramount, 20th Century Fox, Universal** and **Warner Bros.**

Online: **NBCU** is pleased with digital traffic for the **Beijing Olympics**, announcing that the 4.8mln uniques received by **NBCOlympics.com** on Sat swelled to 7.8mln Mon. Overall, online viewership has totaled 21.1mln through 4 days and has not affected linear ratings, research pres **Alan Wurtzel** said. -- **ESPN.com** and **Orbitz.com** have launched an online community tool offering sports fans a place to catalog and share their sports travel trips and game memories through blogs and photo/video sharing. -- 15 workout programs from VOD net **ExerciseTV** are now available on **iTunes**.

Business/Finance: **Outdoor Channel Holdings'** board has authorized an additional \$5mln to its stock buy-back program, which now remains effective through Nov with a \$15mln aggregate. -- **News Corp** and 2 subsidiaries have inked an agreement to take **NDS Group** private through the acquisition of all the latter's Series A shares for \$63 each in cash.

CableFAX Daily Stockwatch

Company	08/14 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	08/14 Close	1-Day Ch
BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS					
BRITISH SKY:	36.09	(0.35)	AMDOCS:	29.94	(0.18)
DIRECTV:	28.25	(0.1)	AMPHENOL:	51.38	0.09
DISNEY:	32.33	0.59	APPLE:	179.32	0.02
ECHOSTAR:	31.57	0.09	ARRIS GROUP:	9.49	0.02
GE:	29.52	0.21	AVID TECH:	24.91	0.19
HEARST-ARGYLE:	21.54	0.79	BIGBAND:	4.68	0.13
ION MEDIA:	1.44	0.00	BLNDER TONGUE:	1.25	0.28
NEWS CORP:	14.40	0.30	BROADCOM:	27.17	0.52
MSOS					
CABLEVISION:	31.31	0.35	C-COR:	11.00	0.00
CHARTER:	1.09	(0.03)	CISCO:	24.67	0.36
COMCAST:	22.00	0.14	COMMSCOPE:	47.47	0.56
COMCAST SPCL:	21.87	0.13	CONCURRENT:	7.48	(0.26)
GCI:	10.78	0.15	CONVERGYS:	14.27	0.03
KNOLOGY:	11.09	0.34	CSG SYSTEMS:	19.61	(0.05)
LIBERTY CAPITAL:	16.08	0.27	ECHOSTAR HOLDING:	31.38	(0.74)
LIBERTY ENTERTAINMENT:	26.17	(0.13)	GOOGLE:	505.49	5.46
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	33.92	0.79	HARMONIC:	8.81	(0.02)
LIBERTY INTERACTIVE:	14.05	0.36	JDSU:	11.41	0.28
MEDIACOM:	7.82	0.13	LEVEL 3:	3.32	0.14
SHAW COMM:	21.16	(0.59)	MICROSOFT:	27.91	0.00
TIME WARNER CABLE:	27.56	0.01	MOTOROLA:	10.02	0.13
VIRGIN MEDIA:	11.04	0.08	NDS:	60.70	0.20
WASH POST:	633.25	5.30	NORTEL:	6.10	0.17
PROGRAMMING					
CBS:	18.05	0.85	OPENTV:	2.08	0.03
CROWN:	4.94	(0.04)	PHILIPS:	33.88	(0.5)
DISCOVERY:	20.32	0.58	RENTRAK:	15.30	(0.1)
EW SCRIPPS:	7.19	0.20	SEACHANGE:	8.21	0.29
GRUPO TELEVISA:	25.33	0.45	SONY:	38.12	(0.23)
INTERACTIVE CORP:	19.20	(0.01)	SPRINT NEXTEL:	8.81	0.16
LIBERTY:	42.60	0.34	THOMAS & BETTS:	46.75	0.25
LODGENET:	4.46	0.29	TIVO:	7.88	0.18
NEW FRONTIER:	3.99	0.03	TOLLGRADE:	6.50	0.08
OUTDOOR:	7.88	0.06	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	27.60	0.85
PLAYBOY:	4.81	0.20	VONAGE:	1.34	0.00
RHI:	15.36	(0.49)	WEBB SYS:	0.04	0.00
SCRIPPS INTERACTIVE:	42.90	0.60	WORLDGATE:	0.30	0.00
TIME WARNER:	15.85	0.33	YAHOO:	20.28	(0.08)
VALUEVISION:	2.97	0.01	TELCOS		
VIACOM:	29.32	(0.04)	AT&T:	31.12	(0.18)
WWE:	16.02	0.10	QWEST:	3.86	(0.03)
TECHNOLOGY					
3COM:	2.24	0.04	VERIZON:	34.69	0.34
ADC:	10.71	0.32	MARKET INDICES		
ADVANTAGE:	3.03	0.00	DOW:	11615.93	82.97
ALCATEL LUCENT:	6.10	(0.05)	NASDAQ:	2453.67	25.05

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PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

United Across the Atlantic

You may not know who *Cristiano Ronaldo* is, but **Fox Soccer Channel** and its fans certainly do. As the star of arguably the world's most recognizable sports franchise (**Manchester United**), Ronaldo scored 31 goals last year to lead all players in England's **Barclays Premier League**, which for my money features the globe's most beautiful form of soccer. Set to kick off '08-'09 season coverage Sat, Fox Soccer has also found the league to be quite enchanting. "It's one of the cornerstones of the network," said gm *David Sternberg*. "We've built a pretty significant following." Since the net was rebranded as Fox Soccer in '05, he said, a premium was placed on providing live coverage, and many of the approximately 160 games on the net's roster this year aren't delayed. Such initiatives have helped Fox Soccer grow distribution nearly 30% over the past 2 years, to 33mln across cable, satellite and telcos. And they've also helped **FoxSoccer.com** become the most popular English-language soccer site in the US by averaging close to 2mln uniques/month, said Sternberg. This year, however, the Premier League may step into its most important role ever. It will serve as a major promotional vehicle for **FoxSoccer.tv**, a broadband service offering on demand matches from the league and around the world. Single matches run \$5, a 10-match package \$30. Although the service hasn't achieved notable success since its roll out earlier this year, Sternberg remains "optimistic" about its potential and pointedly aware of the importance assigned to Fox Soccer's digital goals. Although soccer has been gaining a deeper foothold in American soil thanks to MLS success and a rising Latino population, Sternberg still finds that many prospective advertisers still need to be educated about this cultural shift. And since Fox Soccer isn't rated by **Nielsen**, FoxSoccer.com and FoxSoccer.tv are 2 measurable media that can drive home the point. Perhaps not as effectively as Ronaldo's piercing drives, but at least he plays, in part, on Fox Soccer's team. CH

Highlights: "Thank You, Mr President," Mon, 9pm, **HBO**. We're biased, as is this short doc, but how can't everyone at least like this paean to *Helen Thomas*, 88? Heck, the lady already was a 17-year news vet when she covered **JFK** in '60. She was going strong until May. She'll be back. -- "Skins," Sun, 9pm, **BBC A**. Writers in their early 20's penned this sexually charged drama about a popular teen named Tony and his diverse friends. Don't miss the brilliant opening sequence, when he seems to manage the world using his mobile (duh). SA

Worth a Look: "Into the Unknown w/Josh Bernstein," Mon, 10pm, **Discovery**. If he pulled ratings for **History**, he should for Discovery, right? Handsome anthropologist Josh Bernstein has moved to camp *Zaslav*. Tonight Josh investigates Roman gladiators, and reports 90% of battles didn't end in a kill. Losers could appeal to the crowd. While the signal for death was indeed a downward thumb, the life sign was not an upturned digit, that was a phallic symbol in ancient Rome. Speaking of phallic, Josh is a hunk. SA

Basic Cable Rankings			
(8/04/08-8/10/08)			
Mon-Sun Prime			
1	USA	2.2	2067
2	DSNY	1.9	1786
3	TNT	1.7	1640
4	FOXN	1.5	1384
5	ESPN	1.3	1295
5	TBSC	1.3	1214
7	NAN	1.2	1201
7	LIFE	1.2	1188
9	TOON	1.1	1097
9	HALL	1.1	876
11	SCIF	1	912
12	HGTV	0.9	902
12	A&E	0.9	891
12	FAM	0.9	880
12	SPK	0.9	865
12	FX	0.9	858
17	TRU	0.8	748
17	HIST	0.8	726
17	AMC	0.8	721
20	DISC	0.7	710
20	CMDY	0.7	664
20	CNN	0.7	656
20	BRAV	0.7	624
20	LMN	0.7	464
25	TVLD	0.6	606
25	FOOD	0.6	576
25	MTV	0.6	547
25	TLC	0.6	539
25	NFLN	0.6	232
30	VH1	0.5	517
30	HLN	0.5	471
30	BET	0.5	424
30	OXYG	0.5	332
30	NOGG	0.5	308
35	APL	0.4	417
35	ESP2	0.4	399
35	MSNB	0.4	364
35	EN	0.4	361
35	SOAP	0.4	285
35	NGC	0.4	260
35	BIO	0.4	179
42	TRAV	0.3	302
42	WGNA	0.3	246
42	CMT	0.3	230
42	GSN	0.3	208
42	SPD	0.3	198

*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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It's that time again. Nominate your colleagues, your boss or even yourself for the CableFAX100—our annual cable industry power list—which will appear in the December edition of *CableFAX: The Magazine*.

There are a number of changes we have made to the 100 for this year, so please read the online form carefully.

Please do not limit yourself to CEOs, SVPs, etc. Also nominate influential people who might not be headline makers but who are influential behind the scenes within their company and the industry.

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We are also looking for important regional/local/state cable executives (operators, vendors, programmers and others in the industry) to honor on a new Regional 100 list.

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