

CableFAX Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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Sleep Ready: Cable Rolling Out Energy Saving Set-tops

Cable continues its efforts at energy conservation, with the 6 largest MSOs on track for deploying a "light sleep" option for new set-top boxes next month. Some of those deployments are already underway, and ops are also beginning to provide software upgrades this fall to some boxes already in homes to enable light sleep. For example, **Cox** has begun upgrades and is starting to deploy new boxes with light sleep functionality. The boxes are its **Cisco** HD/DVR and HD-only set-tops. At **Comcast**, a rep said, "we're actively involved in this initiative, and we've begun to deploy this software upgrade to existing boxes." The commitments are part of an energy reduction initiative announced last fall by **NCTA** and **CableLabs**. Light sleep refers to a lower-power condition that allows essential activities within a set-top box to continue while energy consumption associated with other tasks, such as channel tuning and video display, is discontinued. According to CableLabs, light sleep can reduce energy consumption by 20% or more. "Things are completely on track," said CableLabs CTO *Ralph Brown*, who said the top 6 MSOs represent about 85% of the market. "The remaining 15% are sort of covered automatically in that they're not able to buy anything different [from set-top vendors]." CableLabs is on target to issue specifications for deep sleep functionality at the end of this year, with a commitment to take those boxes to field trial at the end of '14, he said. "In order to meet these specifications, we really have to migrate to the next piece of silicon technology that enables power scaling. In other words, various parts of the chip itself are individually powered so that they can be slowed down or turned off when they're not in use." Brown said the silicon development cycle can take anywhere from 18-24 months. Then the set-top manufacturers need development time to integrate that chip with boxes. Plus there are the changes needed with middleware and applications, as well as acceptance testing with MSOs. The **Dept of Energy** has been interested in cable's efforts here, issuing a request in Dec for info on the energy use and efficiency of set-tops and proposing govt regulation to make the boxes more energy efficient. DOE has since suspended its regulatory process with the expectation that the industry will work out a voluntary agreement with energy advocates. It has given cable until Oct 1 to work out the details. "This suspension will allow industry representatives and energy efficiency advocates time to negotiate a non-regulatory agreement to improve the energy efficiency of set-top boxes," DOE said "If successful, a non-regulatory agreement could become effective quickly." DOE will under-



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Featuring Special Guest:



Michael Powell
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take analysis in preparation for a regulatory standard in the event a non-regulatory agreement cannot be reached. "There is a general perception that the industry doesn't care about energy efficiency, and nothing could be further from the truth," Brown said. "It's just not something the industry has been terribly public about. Yes, we're working on set-top box efficiency, which is the most high profile... But our members pay pretty huge energy bills every month, and so they're looking at energy efficiency across the board." Late last month, **SCTE** announced its first 2 standards for energy management, establishing recommended practices for facilities and defining environmental and sustainability requirements for equipment within those facilities (*Cfax*, 8/1). "There is this perception, too, that set-top boxes have consumed more and more energy over time," added Brown. "Over the past 10 years, on average set-tops have decreased energy consumption by 50%... What we're doing now is being more aggressive and more public about our engagement around the set-top boxes, but the industry is doing quite a bit."

Retrans: The end of the month is almost here, so that must mean a retrans consent deadline is on the horizon. **DirecTV's** contract with **Local TV** is set to expire at 12:01 am Sat. Local TV owns 17 stations, including Cleveland, OH, **Fox** affil **WJW**, Memphis **CBS** affil **WREG** and Des Moines **NBC** affil **WHO**. "DirecTV and Local TV have enjoyed a long and productive relationship, and so we would anticipate resolving any remaining business issues amicably without any interruptions to our customers," the DBS provider said. "We remain willing to compensate Local TV fairly, and will always strive to provide our customers an unparalleled TV experience at the most reasonable value." The broadcaster sees it differently, telling viewers there is a "strong likelihood" DTV subs will lose the stations because it can't get what it thinks is a fair rate. Meanwhile, DirecTV subs have been without **Northwest Broadcasting's** Fox stations in Spokane and Yakima-Pasco-Richland-Kennewick, WA, as well as Binghamton, NY, and Medford-Klamath Falls, OR, since Aug 13. What's particularly interesting about the Northwest drop is that it hasn't received much attention, even from the local press. For example, in Spokane, *The Spokesman Review* didn't write about it until Aug 28. As summer repeats wind down and Sun football returns, maybe that will change...

Election 2012: Fox News bested all cable and broadcast nets in the 10-11pm hour of the Republican Natl Convention Tues, notching 6.9mln viewers. Runner-up **NBC** netted 4.8mln. **CNN** and **MSNBC** were behind **CBS** and **ABC**, with both averaging 1.47mln viewers. Fox News also beat ABC, CBS, CNN and MSNBC in the so-called news demo (25-54s) during that time.

Earnings: TiVo's 2Q revenue increased 7 YOY to \$65.3mln as the company's net loss widened to \$27.7mln from \$19.6mln. "The subscription increases we achieved this quarter are the result of operators utilizing our advanced television offering to become more competitive in their markets and to drive materially improved subscriber metrics," said TiVo CEO *Tom Rogers*, pointing to success in the UK with Virgin Media. In the US, **GCI** recently joined TiVo's client roster. **Comcast** is offering a TiVo service in Boston and San Fran Bay, with plans to launch it in Sacramento, Portland and Denver next, Rogers said. Other US MSO affiliates include **Suddenlink** and **Charter**. On the legal side, TiVo is preparing for a trial in Oct in its patent dispute with Verizon and is "moving forward on our other cases involving **Motorola**, **Cisco** and **Time Warner Cable**," Rogers said in a press release.

Carriage: Verizon added Spanish-language broadcaster **MundoFox** to **FiOS TV** in L.A. and Dallas. By week's end, it will be available to FiOS subs in MA, RI, CT, NJ and NYC. It will roll out in FL next month, and an HD version should be available by year-end.

At the Portals: DISH urged the **FCC** not to shift its spectrum holdings in the 2 GHz band and to OK rules for using satellite spectrum in terrestrial settings, said an ex parte filing. A "5Mhz upward shift at 2000-2020 Mhz would needlessly inject serious regulatory and technical obstacles," DISH said. The DBS provider is awaiting final FCC rules on the terrestrial use of MSS spectrum and is seeking a waiver to offer terrestrial-only devices.

Social TV: Who said you can't be social while maintaining couch potato status? **AT&T** launched its new interactive app allowing **U-Verse** subs to view their **Facebook** newsfeeds, friends, updates and information about the TV shows they are watching, and interact with friends while watching shows. Subs can add up to 10 different Facebook accounts per set-top. To access the service, an existing Facebook account and a U-Verse HSD account is required.

Programming: INSP signed a multi-year deal with **NBCU Cable** for the exclusive basic cable rights for "The Virginian."

BUSINESS & FINANCE

Initially aired in '62, "The Virginian" was the first 90-min, color western on TV. Only "Bonanza" and "Gunsmoke" had a longer run on TV. -- **Bravo's** "It's a Brad, Brad World" nabbed a 2nd season. The net also announced new series "Courtney Loves Dallas," featuring the "Most Eligible Dallas" cast member and her social scene. -- **Syfy** greenlit a 20-ep, Season 3 of "Paranormal Witness."

Ratings: **GMC** original movie "Somebody's Child" premiered to 2.1mln cumulative viewers this past weekend, with it ranking 3rd all-time among GMC movie premieres in women 25-54 and women 18-49. The screenplay won an honorable mention at the American Black Film Festival last year. -- **VH1** ended the summer with some of its hot series hitting the top of the ratings chart. Thanks to "Love & Hip Hop Atlanta" and "Single Ladies," the net was the #1 cable net for women 18-49 on Mon nights for 13 straight weeks

People: **Nickelodeon** vet *Russell Hicks* was named pres, content dev and prod for the Nickelodeon Group.

On the Circuit: **Motorola Mobility Home** and **SCTE** are among the confirmed exhibitors for **NAMIC's** Tech Expo & Diversity Career Fair Sept 11 at the Hilton NY. The event, which is being held in partnership with **CableFAX**, is free and open to the public. However, advanced registration is required for jobseekers at www.namic.com.

CableFAX Daily Stockwatch

Company	08/29 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	08/29 Close	1-Day Ch
BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS					
DIRECTV:	52.55	0.24	CONVERGYS:	15.60	0.15
DISH:	31.83	UNCH	CSG SYSTEMS:	21.49	(0.08)
DISNEY:	50.04	0.41	ECHOSTAR:	27.20	(0.03)
GE:	20.82	0.01	GOOGLE:	688.01	10.76
NEWS CORP:	23.61	0.10	HARMONIC:	4.57	0.14
MSOS					
CABLEVISION:	14.77	(0.06)	INTEL:	24.67	(0.33)
CHARTER:	76.46	(0.3)	JDSU:	11.75	(0.16)
COMCAST:	33.95	UNCH	LEVEL 3:	22.05	0.12
COMCAST SPCL:	33.04	0.07	MICROSOFT:	30.65	0.02
GCI:	9.18	0.15	RENTRAK:	17.50	0.01
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	55.14	0.02	SEACHANGE:	8.11	0.32
LIBERTY INT:	18.12	0.02	SONY:	11.73	0.24
SHAW COMM:	20.45	0.03	SPRINT NEXTEL:	4.86	0.01
TIME WARNER CABLE:	89.33	0.01	TIVO:	9.36	(0.18)
VIRGIN MEDIA:	27.33	0.23	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	15.50	UNCH
WASH POST:	349.99	(2.99)	VONAGE:	2.12	0.03
PROGRAMMING					
AMC NETWORKS:	38.96	0.43	YAHOO:	14.84	0.12
CBS:	36.18	(0.17)	TELCOS		
CROWN:	1.66	(0.04)	AT&T:	36.82	0.18
DISCOVERY:	53.86	0.31	VERIZON:	43.09	0.42
GRUPO TELEVISIA:	23.13	(0.05)	MARKET INDICES		
HSN:	44.92	0.31	DOW:	13107.48	4.49
INTERACTIVE CORP:	52.23	0.05	NASDAQ:	3081.19	4.05
LIONSGATE:	14.76	0.55	S&P 500:	1410.49	1.19
LODGENET:	0.36	0.06	TECHNOLOGY		
NEW FRONTIER:	1.58	0.02	ADVANTAGE:	2.19	0.05
OUTDOOR:	6.97	(0.02)	ALCATEL LUCENT:	1.14	(0.01)
SCRIPPS INT:	59.24	(0.12)	AMDOCS:	32.15	0.10
TIME WARNER:	41.85	0.58	AMPHENOL:	60.80	0.02
VALUEVISION:	1.89	(0.04)	AOL:	33.74	0.11
VIACOM:	50.63	(0.32)	APPLE:	673.47	(1.33)
WWE:	8.34	(0.1)	ARRIS GROUP:	13.69	0.04
MARKET INDICES					
DOW: 13107.48 4.49					
NASDAQ: 3081.19 4.05					
S&P 500: 1410.49 1.19					

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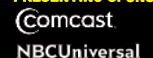
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What's News?

Commentary by Steve Effros

When I was studying journalism in college (many, many years ago!) prior to my stints at ABC and NBC Network News and *The New York Times*, my professors—most of them professional news people—would often challenge us with the question “what’s news?”

If you proposed a headline that read “Grass Continues to Grow in Orlando Today” you were not getting the point.



That isn’t news. “News” would be if suddenly all the grass stopped growing in Orlando. One common definition is that “...news is new information relating to current events.”

Based on that notion, it would appear that a whole lot of the media folks today missed those classes. I

got a “Breaking News” alert recently from the New York Times that breathlessly informed me Mitt Romney had just been named the Republican presidential nominee. That wasn’t news. Or at least it wasn’t news warranting a demand of my instant attention on the new electronic devices that allow us to keep track of what is going on almost non-stop.

Similarly, I would hope the newspapers refrain from front page banner headlines next week blaring the startling “news” that President Obama has been renominated by his party! Again, the real news would be if he wasn’t! The root of the word “news” is “new.” Simply “reporting” what is entirely expected and normal is a questionable allocation of resources, or to put it another way around, is a gross waste of the time of news consumers.

I know we can get into a long debate about what is and is not news. That’s not my intention here. What I want to point out is how difficult it is, particularly given all our additional sources and technologies for disseminating information, to even define what “news” is.

Is it “news” that there are multiple bloggers who, on a daily basis, complain that no matter what they are getting now, or what new service is being rolled out or offered, it’s not quick enough, offered to everyone at once, or cheap enough? That’s not “news,” that’s opinion.

The “news aggregating” sites, however—the ones that provide the headlines from all sectors that they think are of significance—continue to be dominated by such stuff. I know there will be folks who disagree with me on this, and think that “analysis” is what makes the “news” of value. It’s the opposite of the C-SPAN theory, which says witnessing what is happening without “expert analysis” allows the viewer to reach his or her own conclusion. But that raises the question, is C-SPAN a “news channel”? Are the bloggers? Who decides?

And that’s why I raised all this. The FCC, because of its decision in the “Comcast/Tennis Channel” case, defining “sports” channels, has now jumped into the pool of defining the nature of the channels we offer, and they claim authority to tell us what we can and cannot do with those channels, where they may be put, and which other channels they compete with. It’s not a “slippery slope” they are on the edge of, it’s a huge hole they have dug, and are now at the bottom of. The US Court of Appeals has now put a “stay” on such government editorial activities until they can determine if the FCC has any business doing it. I don’t think they do. Characterizing which channels are offering “news” or whether “news” and “opinion” are equal is just not what the government should be involved in. The “news” will be what the courts ultimately decide.

Steve

T:202-630-2099
steve@effros.com

(Steve Effros was President of CATA for 23 years and is now an advisor and consultant to the cable industry)

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