

CableFAX Daily™

Tuesday — September 28, 2010

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 21 / No. 187

All Sides: Fox Warns DISH Subs They Could Lose Cable Nets on Fri

While Fox launched creative aimed at Cablevision's expiring contract earlier this month, a new campaign aimed at DISH with a more pressing deadline appeared Sun. The satellite provider stands to lose all the Fox Sports RSNs, FX and Nat Geo if a new deal is not reached by 12:01am Fri (Cablevision's deadline for reaching a deal for the Fox broadcast, Fox Deportes, Nat Geo Wild and My Network TV is Oct 16). "We have programming contracts that expire on a regular basis—in fact, every week," a DISH spokesperson said. "Almost all of them are resolved prior to when the contract expires or before any channels are removed by programmers. As you know, we have a history of working hard to keep programming rate increases to a minimum, especially in this tough economy." Fox is in the interesting position of running campaigns against 2 different high-profile distributors at the same time. Spots started running on DISH Sun, and a Website launched at GetWhatIPaidFor.com (no Twitter feed as of Mon afternoon, but we suspect that's coming). Last Sun, DISH launched KeepFoxOn.com and ads aimed at Cablevision, which has so far been mum on negotiations and Fox's marketing. The Cablevision campaign includes a Twitter and Facebook feed. Given the longer lead time on CVC and the fact that DISH still has a Fox O&O deal that is set to expire before year-end, it sounds like things may have recently soured. Perhaps Fox was hoping to negotiate the cable nets with the O&Os? The threat of channel drops on Fri comes as MLB season winds down and teams make a run for the playoffs. The Rays, Yankees and Twins are duking it out for the best record in the American League, all within a game of each other. DISH subs could also lose shows like FX's "Sons of Anarchy" and Nat Geo's "Border Wars" if channels go dark. "You deserve more than an empty DISH," Fox's ads on DISH proclaim. Fox's site directs DISH customers to alternative providers DirectTV, Verizon FiOS, AT&T U-Verse and "Your local cable provider."

Comcast-NBCU: With Jeff Zucker announcing he's out once the Comcast-NBCU deal is done, Comcast announced the obvious Sun—Steve Burke will become CEO of NBCU upon the close of Comcast's 51% acquisition for NBCU from GE. Burke will keep his COO Comcast Corp title, which means Comcast Cable pres Neil Smit will continue to report to him. It sounds like the guessing games over just who will shake out where will have to continue, as Comcast and GE said Sun that there will be no additional structural or personnel announcements until the deal closing process and timing is certain.

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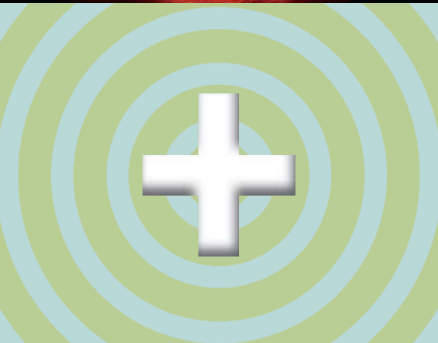
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On the finance front, **Vivendi** completed the sale of 7.66% of NBCU to GE for \$2bln, with its remaining 12.34% stake slated to be sold to GE for \$3.8bln upon closing of the Comcast deal. Meanwhile, NBCU announced a proposed offering of sr unsecured notes in a private placement, part of the \$9.1bln of financing NBCU agreed to raise in connection with the deal. **Miller Tabak's David Joyce** said the transaction is a "smart deal for Comcast shareholders, as the JV's targeted leverage ratio of 2.5x and the free cash flow generation can fund the buy-in of the rest of the 49% of NBC Uni owned post-close by GE by either year-end 2016 (with constant 2.5x leverage), or year-end 2017 (with the current level of debt constant). We assume a 10% annual growth in the Content JV OCF." Citing potential integration challenges, **S&P** maintained its 'strong sell' rating on Comcast's Class A shares.

On the Hill: Will he? Won't he? Another week with the House in session means another week of guessing whether or not House Commerce chmn **Henry Waxman** (D-CA) will introduce a net neutrality bill that would essentially codify the **FCC's** existing 4 open Internet principles for 2 years and take broadband reclassification off the table for that time. With the House set to recess this week, time's running out. A draft of the proposed framework made the rounds Mon. It included the FCC having the ability on a case-by-case basis to fine a company in violation of the principles of no more than \$2mln and the FCC delivering a report to the House and Senate Commerce cmtes by the end of '11 on any additional authority needed to implement the National Broadband Plan and to ensure further consumer protections regarding the Internet.

In the States: As expected, **Belo** and **Time Warner Cable** reached a retrans agreement in principal that kept the channels from being pulled over the weekend.

Measurement: **Verizon Wireless** and **P&G** are among co's planning to test the newly-developed **Nielsen Online Campaign Ratings** in 4Q. Slated to roll out commercially next year, the service combines traditional Nielsen TV and online panel data with aggregated, anonymous demo info from participating online data contributors to provide reach, frequency and Gross Rating Point measures for online ad campaigns running nearly anywhere on the Web. Meanwhile, Nielsen informed clients last week that implementation of its **Extended Screen** measurement, which will blend Internet viewing of TV shows with its NPM audience estimates, is pushed to Apr 25 from Jan 31. The 1st phase will include measurement of TV shows that are served online with identical content and national ads, with plans calling for later feature of ratings for shows that run different ads online. Nielsen has finished the rollout of Web meters to approx 8,700 homes and 25K people.

VOD: **Disney**, **Warner Bros** and **Sony Pictures** are in talks to provide VOD access to new films shortly after their theater run, **In Demand** chief **Bob Benya** told **Bloomberg** Sun. Customers would be charged up to \$30 for home viewing of the movies. Bloomberg said Disney is also looking at streaming films on Web-connected devices such as the **Xbox** gaming console. The items follows news that **Time Warner Cable** pitched studios on a related service titled "Home Theater On Demand" (**Cfax**, 5/25) during the Cable Show in May.

Advertising: **World Cup**-focused research from the **ESPN XP** cross-media research initiative showed that a coordinated multiplatform campaign produces better results for advertisers on key performance metrics such as recall, brand attitude, purchase intent and brand affinity. Analysis demonstrated that advertiser presence across all platforms helps to ensure not only exposure but also authenticity of sponsorship, and advertisers who put together the most cohesive story saw the greatest impact. To wit: In 1 case study, persons who were exposed to an advertiser on all 5 ESPN platforms had more than 3 times the sponsor association as persons who were exposed only on TV, with data showing progressively higher effectiveness with exposure on more platforms. --Through the intro of a competition to help drive the development of new interactive ad formats specifically for brand marketers, **IAB** is asking companies and individuals to submit formats that will be evaluated on criteria including user experience, functionality and page integration. Info at **IAB.net/risingstars**.

Editor's Note: Don't miss our special section on iTV and advanced advertising starting on p5 of this issue.

Research: Two-fifths of US TV homes have at least 1 DVR, an increase from just 8% 5 years ago, according to **Leichtman Research**. Also, 64% of all digital cable subs have used VOD, with 52% of them having viewed on demand programming in the past month. 5 years ago, half of digital cable subs had used VOD. **[More info at CableFAXDaily.com].**

Programming: Syndicated series "Judge Karen's Court" will debut on **TV One**, Oct 4, with back-to-back eps at 6 and 6:30pm ET. -- "Bullying: No Escape: an Anderson Cooper 360 Special Report" with **People Magazine** and **Cartoon** will air Oct 8, 10pm ET, **CNN**. It's part of a larger commitment to anti-bullying efforts across Time Warner

BUSINESS & FINANCE

divisions. -- **Comcast** will offer customers a world premiere 30-sec, first list to 4 songs of *Taylor Swift's* new album, due in stores Oct 25. The music offering will be available only on **Comcast On Demand** and on-line at **XfinityTV.com** starting Mon.

People: **DIY** svp, gm *Kathleen Finch* has a new title: svp, gm of **Scripps Nets'** flagship channel **HGTV**. She reports to HGTV pres *Jim Samples*. *Andy Singer*, svp, programming at DIY, will succeed her as gm for DIY. -- **Time Warner** tapped *Belinda Lui* as vp, international relations and public policy, Asia Pacific. -- **Ren-trak** board member and Audit Cmte chmn *Brent Rosenthal* was named vice chmn of the board.

Honor: **Ascent Media's Viia** digital asset mgmt system earned a '10 **Oracle Fusion Middleware Innovation Award**. The system allows pay TV ops to manage and monetize on demand content on multiple platforms by offering content aggregation and archiving, catalog management and transcoding and media processing.

Business/Finance: **Motorola** will seek shareholder approval for a reverse split of its common stock at a special meeting on Nov 29. The proposal includes a ratio ranging between at least 1-for-every-3 up to 1-for-every-7 shares, to be determined by Moto's board, and includes a corresponding decrease in the total number of shares of common stock that Moto is authorized to issue.

CableFAX Daily Stockwatch

Company	09/27 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	09/27 Close	1-Day Ch
BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS					
DIRECTV:	41.87	(0.07)	BIGBAND:	2.84	(0.01)
DISH:	19.11	(0.18)	BLNDER TONGUE:	2.38	(0.04)
DISNEY:	33.29	(0.29)	BROADCOM:	33.85	(0.02)
GE:	16.43	(0.23)	CISCO:	22.11	0.02
NEWS CORP:	15.66	(0.18)	CLEARWIRE:	7.82	0.25
MSOS					
CABLEVISION:	25.78	(0.02)	COMMSCOPE:	23.22	(0.25)
CHARTER:	33.05	(0.75)	CONCURRENT:	6.60	0.04
COMCAST:	18.31	(0.26)	CONVERGYS:	10.46	(0.01)
COMCAST SPCL:	17.26	(0.22)	CSG SYSTEMS:	18.37	(2.28)
GCI:	10.15	(0.02)	ECHOSTAR:	19.00	(0.21)
KNOWLOGY:	13.19	(0.01)	GOOGLE:	530.41	3.12
LIBERTY CAPITAL:	51.77	(0.24)	HARMONIC:	6.60	(0.03)
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	30.92	0.18	INTEL:	19.23	(0.19)
LIBERTY INT:	13.25	(0.06)	JDSU:	12.16	(0.21)
MEDIACOM:	6.69	0.10	LEVEL 3:	0.98	0.01
SHAW COMM:	21.59	(0.3)	MICROSOFT:	24.73	(0.04)
TIME WARNER CABLE:	53.17	0.06	MOTOROLA:	8.58	(0.1)
VIRGIN MEDIA:	22.67	(0.07)	RENTRAK:	25.13	(0.8)
WASH POST:	371.76	(8.24)	SEACHANGE:	7.40	(0.1)
PROGRAMMING					
CBS:	15.90	(0.27)	SONY:	30.86	(0.14)
CROWN:	2.21	(0.09)	SPRINT NEXTEL:	4.59	0.15
DISCOVERY:	43.73	0.20	THOMAS & BETTS:	41.45	0.13
GRUPO TELEVISIA:	18.48	(0.22)	TIVO:	9.22	0.19
HSN:	29.66	(0.09)	TOLLGRADE:	7.40	(0.18)
INTERACTIVE CORP:	26.70	(0.1)	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	20.45	0.05
LIBERTY:	37.32	(0.3)	VONAGE:	2.52	0.02
LIBERTY STARZ:	63.84	(0.66)	YAHOO:	14.28	(0.22)
LIONSGATE:	7.19	(0.02)	TELCOS		
LODGENET:	3.31	0.03	AT&T:	28.87	0.29
NEW FRONTIER:	1.83	(0.02)	QWEST:	6.25	-0.00
PLAYBOY:	5.05	0.00	VERIZON:	32.86	0.22
SCRIPPS INT:	46.90	0.26	MARKET INDICES		
TIME WARNER:	30.92	(0.45)	NASDAQ:	2369.77	(11.45)
VALUEVISION:	1.86	(0.03)			
VIACOM:	39.61	(0.01)			
WWE:	13.75	(0.08)			
TECHNOLOGY					
ADC:	12.70	0.04			
ADVANTAGE:	3.00	(0.1)			
ALCATEL LUCENT:	3.38	0.02			
AMDOCS:	28.34	0.11			
AMPHENOL:	48.46	(0.26)			
AOL:	23.52	(0.45)			
APPLE:	291.16	(1.16)			
AVID TECH:	12.77	0.06			

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Questions: Contact Elizabeth Brown at ebrown@accsintel.com; 301-354-1610

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NewWave Communications - Independent Operator of the Year
 Accepting: Jim Gleason, President & CEO

CableFAX Daily™

iTV and Advanced Advertising Update

Going Interactive: Cable Embraces iTV Despite Uncertainty, Slow Evolution

Interactive television is dead. Debunked. Discredited. Signed, sealed and delivered into the annals of a cable history—one littered with the tombstones of companies that tried and failed to transform TV. That was the attitude only a few short years ago. And at the time it was pretty darned accurate.

But as everyone in the cable industry now firmly grasps, interactive TV—or iTV for short—is back with a vengeance. And this is no angry poltergeist haunting us out of spite. In fact, this isn't a ghost of the past at all. Rather, this is an all-new form of iTV that leverages the cable broadband infrastructure, Internet content, fast-evolving consumer habits, new industry specs that took years to develop, third-party software developers and, of course, the cooperation (finally) of big MSOs that for years each tried their own experiments with a litany of vendors and solutions. Now, they're all rowing the same boat (sorry). "The Internet and the digital services that have been provided to consumers over the last few years have really trained them," notes *Kevin Hurst*, dir, product mgmt at **Ensequence**. "All of this has really changed what used to be called a lean-back medium into a lean-forward medium."

Meanwhile, innovative cable networks and brands no longer need the kind of convincing that once caused iTV believers to pull their hair out in frustration. At this point, nets and their advertising partners immersed in multiplatform marketing campaigns increasingly see the unique value of hypertargeting, audience engagement and more accurate measurement—all of which is now finally becoming possible in the new iTV age. "With Web advertising, advertisers get data not only on viewer impressions, but also on opt-in rate, time spent with the ad, and conversion rates," says Hurst. "They also get more options to target their prospects so messages are more relevant. This is what advertisers want from TV advertising, and will get with targeted and interactive TV advertising."

Into the Unknown

Of course, despite years of planning and on some level execution, iTV remains in its early days. Cable's broader challenge with iTV and advanced advertising remains the simple unknowns. What types of interactivity will TV viewers truly embrace? How much interactivity is too much? And what kind of interactivity is appropriate for what sort of content? Most of these questions remain open and subject to what operators, programmers and advertisers learn over the couple of years as new iTV features roll out across the country. **HSN**, whose Shop by Remote is a pioneering iTV service, has amassed 30mln multichannel homes despite the slow evolution to a uniform platform—at least on the cable side. "Interactive TV standards continue to be a challenge," says HSN vp, advanced services *John McDevitt*. "Great progress has been made with EBIF and tru2way, but each operator is still unique."

But while the iTV world remains imperfect, things continue to improve. **Canoe Ventures**, after all, spent roughly the last 2 years building consensus among operators, working with **CableLabs** and testing the waters in order to launch its 1st bona fide product over the summer. That "RFI" app creates an overlay within the 1st 3-5 seconds of a typical 30-sec spot, allowing users to respond using the arrow buttons on their remotes and receive a product sample in the mail. "It is live, and we're quite happy with the success so far," says Canoe svp, product management *Jim Turner*. Canoe has actually evolved into a matchmaker of sorts, helping cable programmers find their way to brands interested in RFI and vice versa. "We have been meeting with advertisers and helping them understand how RFI can add value to their national campaigns and bringing them together with our networks sales teams," says Turner, noting Canoe has met with more than 70 different agencies and advertisers.

Canoe's 2nd product, which will start trialing later this year, is a polling application in which programmers will be able to present a question and give viewers 2-4 options to answer. That offer can include a sponsor and reside on either side of a commercial break (Questions in the 1st pod, results in the 2nd). "The application clearly drives retention, drives engagement, and our programming partners are very excited about getting that launched," Turner says. Canoe is also developing a trivia app that will allow viewers answer questions and get instant results—all with the ability to attach a brand message or special offer. Says Turner: "National programmer originated interactive television is here, and it's live."

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EBIF Anyone?

At the center of Canoe's work lies the EBIF spec that essentially allows advertisers and nets to write iTV apps once and know that they will work across disparate cable systems using many different set-top boxes. EBIF has been mostly embraced by networks, advertising agencies and brands following years of skepticism when the mere mention of iTV elicited bleary-eyed stares. And cable operators are rolling out EBIF with gusto, hopeful that the 1st industrywide and widely accepted iTV spec will lead to an explosion of app development. **Comcast** chmn/CEO *Brian Roberts* has even suggested that such apps could create the kind of loyalty around cable that **Apple's** app store created for the iPhone (Interestingly, Apple's latest iteration of Apple TV goes the opposite direction, emphasizing media streaming instead of apps). The bottom line is that EBIF appears here to stay: According to a recent report by **SNL Kagan**, the current population of EBIF-enabled homes will expand to 33.5mln homes by year-end, hitting 42.9mln in '11 and to 46mln in '12. That's 91% penetration within 2 years. But the hard-won spec is far from a panacea, and many networks and advertisers have already grumbled about the lack of uniformity among EBIF "user agents." Such agents are essentially pieces of software code embedded within each set-top enabling interaction between the app and the viewer. "Think of it as a set of ears that's sitting on the set-top box," says *James Mumma*, exec dir, iTV Product Development at Comcast. "The ears turn on and start listening and it says, 'Oh, that's an EBIF app.'"

It sounds simple and elegant—and in many ways it is—but user agents vary among MSOs. So while EBIF has greatly simplified what was once an impossible task of writing apps that would work across systems, the industry has yet to reach a place where app developers can literally write something once and have it work everywhere with absolutely no modifications. At the Cable Show earlier this year, several execs alluded to the user agent issue, with **NBCU** vp, digital distribution *Michael Aaronson* specifically noting that the existence of different user agents makes it difficult to roll out iTV apps nationwide. Of course, some of these technical hurdles are likely temporary, and none seem to have dampened overall long-term enthusiasm. In fact, they might just be a necessary part of pushing cable toward a more open process that elicits maximum participation. "The user agents are complex in that they're different bits of codes, but what we've been able to do through a long and painful process is make that a more transparent process," says Canoe's Turner.

Of course, the idea that iTV apps must cope with a multitude of systems isn't necessarily an insurmountable problem—especially if app developers avoid the temptation to get too sophisticated with their wares. "It doesn't need to be all that complicated," says Mumma. "It doesn't have to have a lot of bells and whistles on it to provide and very good and compelling user experience." Mumma also points out that app developers are finding ways to make apps more flexible across boxes. "The applications are evolving to be able to take advantage of the resources available to it on the set-top box," he says. HSN, meanwhile, has learned through experience to keep it simple. "It really is a balancing act to increase the scope of what is offered while keeping the quick and easy experience

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our customers have grown to like and expect,” says McDevitt. “Everyone talks about the web coming to the TV, but for us it is different from that; it is more of creating a specialized TV experience that really fits with how people watch their TV... keeping it natural and intuitive.”

Into the Future...

iTV is expected to evolve quickly as more operators, nets and brands participate, with many preparing for more targeted iTV that will truly allow advertisers to interact with specific households. The idea is that targeted messages—combined with the power of an instant call-to-action through iTV—will create a powerful new selling tool for both network advertising and operators’ local ad sales operations. “Different MSO’s are moving at different speeds on providing targeting capabilities,” notes Hurst. “Some should have their entire base of subscribers up and running by year’s end while others haven’t started trials. It will take a while to sort out the technical and privacy issues surrounding this new offering and have it available across the majority of the cable footprint.” It’s no secret that targeted iTV has long made MSOs and programmers salivate. “This really opens the door for the set-top box,” says Mumma, noting that ops can obviously help advertisers and nets target ads to the right households.

Of course, operators have plenty of decisions to make, with choices of vendors and methodologies. **ActiveVideo Networks**, for example has been pushing a cloud-based iTV system that relies more on the cable headend than the set-top box. That offers some advantages, says ActiveVideo svp, marketing *Edgar Villalpando*, including taking the “lowest common denominator approach” so that even the most basic set-top can handle relatively sophisticated iTV features. “You’re actually making the television screen smarter by taking the brain out,” he says. “Any device that has a video decoder can give you a very enhanced, intelligent video experience.” The idea is to make iTV app creation as simple for a network as creating a separate ad pod for **Hulu**. Villalpando also envisions new iTV revenue streams for ops, which could offer a multi-camera version of a pay-per-view sports event and share revenue with the content producer—or even create a \$5-10 iTV subscriber tier that includes a suite of popular EBIF apps.

Meanwhile, CableLabs in Oct will start testing several new user agents and apps related to iTV’s next EBIF spec known as IO6, which is slated for release by year-end. IO6 will include guidelines for “well-behaved” apps that will allow several apps to share the screen at the same time, as well as time-shifted support enabling app playback during DVR viewing. But resultant business issues could dominate the future, including the relationship between operators and programmers. How will “bounded” apps (ie, those attached to specific shows and nets) be treated in relation to “unbounded” apps (ie, things like Caller ID or EPG-related features typically offered by the operator)? Will one type take precedent over the other—especially when they involve advertising? In the past, the industry could depend on a simple distinction between local ad sales handled by the operator and national ad sales handled by cable networks. But iTV blurs that distinction, potentially creating situations in which both will compete for space and priority on the TV screen. And how does all of this fit into the existing controversies about “over the top” content and authentication? “Programmers and MSOs need to collaborate closely to operationalize iTV and to make it a great user experience that opens new revenue channels,” says Mumma. “Both programmers and MSOs will need to work with advertisers to establish a value for apps so we can then agree on revenue share.”

-Michael Grebb

[For even more detail on iTV and where it’s going, check out our recent webinar “Capitalizing on iTV,” which is available on demand at http://www.cablefax.com/cfp/webinars/going_interactive_july21.html]

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