

CableFAX Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

Volume 17 / No. 226

The Wait: Operator Says Motorola Not Taking DCT-700 Orders, RCN Files Waiver Request

The FCC's inaction on cable's waiver requests for the July 1, 2007 set-top integration ban appears to be taking a toll. **BendBroadband** has told the FCC that Motorola stopped accepting orders for the DCT-700 last Thurs, citing the July 1 ban that requires cable ops to only deploy boxes with a CableCARD. A Moto spokesman left a message for **Cfax** late Mon, saying that, "There's absolutely no truth to that." Calls for further comment were not returned by deadline. BendBroadband counts Moto as its only existing supplier of low-cost boxes, and views the boxes as critical for its digital simulcasting. The cost difference from the sub-\$100 DCT-700 set-top to Moto's new, low-end DCH-100 set-top appears great, with **RCN** reporting the new box runs \$232. Several MSOs—including BendBroadband, **Comcast** and **Charter**—asked the FCC months ago to exempt lower-end boxes from the deadline. Some exemption requests include **S-A's** Explorer 940 set-top and **Pace's** Chicago box. S-A said it will continue to accept US orders for the box until July (longer if the FCC grants an exemption), and it will keep selling the box outside the US after that date. Pace's Chicago is currently only deployed in Canada, with the vendor still accepting US orders for it. Overbuilder RCN is the latest to file a waiver request, petitioning the FCC Fri to have Moto's DCT-700 exempted from the ban. RCN said that smaller operators are disproportionately burdened, as it believes that larger competitors are ordering millions of the DCT-700 prior to July 1, thus putting smaller operators with smaller orders in jeopardy of not receiving the boxes. Last week, Comcast CEO *Brian Roberts* visited the FCC to again make the MSO's case for the waiver. **NCTA** and **Millennium Digital Media** chmn *Kelvin Westbrook* also called upon the Commission, pressing for action. NCTA wants the entire ban deferred until cable ops deploy a new downloadable security system, or until 2010, if they haven't deployed the tech by then. Meanwhile, **The Electronic Frontier Foundation** is backing **CEA's** argument to keep the ban in place and circulating a form letter urging the FCC not to grant cable's waiver requests.

Competition: **Verizon** will hike next year the monthly rates for portions of its **FiOS TV** video service. New subs in NY, NJ, TX, MA, CA, FL, and MD who order the service's most popular "Premier" programming package—offering 200 channels and a 2.4K-title VOD library—will pay \$42.99/month, a 7.6% premium over current prices. The new rates take effect in VA Jan 14. Existing customers will pay the same \$39.95 monthly fee they have been charged since the service's '05 inception. Pricing of certain pay channels and programming tiers will also increase for new subs, said a VZ spokesperson. Monthly fees for both **HBO** alone and a **HBO/Cinemax** package will rise by \$1.04, and certain sports tiers will cost an additional \$2.04/month. VZ counted 118K total video subs at the end of 3Q06.

Wireless: **Comcast** launched a wireless trial this month, offering it as a \$33 bundle add-on. Subs get 200 free minutes, free nights/weekends, free long distance, 300 free text messages and the ability to forward calls between a customer's Comcast VoIP phone and their wireless phone, reports **UBS** in a note to clients. The MSO is offering

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a \$15-\$25 a la carte package that allows customers to access more of Comcast's content over a wireless device.

UBS also notes that it doesn't believe Comcast will buy **Sprint** or **RCN**, saying it doesn't believe wireless is the next leg in the company's growth. Instead, Comcast will focus on the commercial market.

In the States: **InsightBusiness** is rolling out this month ramped up HSD speeds of up to 15Mbps downstream and up to 1.5Mbps upstream. "BusinessBroadband" packages are priced from \$49.95-\$239.95/month, depending on level of service. Earlier this month, **Insight** announced it's upping standard, residential HSD to up to 10Mbps/1Mbps (**Cfax**, 11/8).

VOD: **Charter** has collaborated with **C-COR**, **Atlas On Demand** and **TVN** to launch a VOD advertising trial in St Louis. C-COR's "nABLE" on demand ad insertion solution rotates ad copy without re-encoding programs, and integrates with Atlas' automated campaign management, ad decision logic optimization and reporting tools. Also included is TVN's ad distribution system and content from **Hollywood.com**, **Vehix**.

Deals: **Boston Ventures** bought a majority interest in Houston cable, Internet and phone provider **En-Touch Systems**. **DH Capital** represented En Touch.

Online: **Comcast** opened an online store at **Amazon.com** to help customers learn more about its HSD service and related offerings. Featured is an online offer that includes 6 months of its HSD service for \$20/month, and through the '06 holiday season, customers who sign up for the service will receive a \$100 gift certificate for use at amazon.com. -- **Gemstar-TV Guide's** online division inked agreements to syndicate its program listings grids to several **Fox Interactive Media** properties, including **FOXSports.com** and **IGN Entertainment**. TVG also expanded its syndication agreement with Fox TV Stations, which includes 25 FOX local TV Station Web sites. -- A new agreement with **Fox News** allows **Internet Broadcast** to feature up to 40 Fox intl and US video news stories a day at ibctoday.com. -- **MTVN** licensed to **Concert.tv** free rights to its "Staying Alive – 48fest," a doc that follows 48 people competing in an MTV film competition for HIV and AIDS related themes, which was held in conjunction with the '06 "International AIDS Conference" in Toronto. Concert.tv will air the doc throughout Dec, beginning on World AIDS Day (Dec 1).

Technology: **ReplayTV** unveiled "ReplayTV PC Edition," a DVR software program for PCs. Features include content recordings based on actors, directors and genres, and a channel guide.

Programming: **Versus** introduced during its Mon **NHL** telecast a rail camera, offering views of the action from a rail system situated just above the glass on one side of the arena. If successful, the technology will be used during the **NHL All-Star Game** on Jan 24. -- **Lifetime** ordered 18 eps of "Gay, Straight or Taken" (Jan '07), a dating show in which a woman must decide, of 3 men, who is gay, straight or already taken. A correct choice of the single man nets a grand prize; a wrong choice gives the prize to the misidentified man.

Intl: **Cedar Point** established a wholly-owned European subsidiary in Meersburg, Germany. *Michael Brunsveld* was named managing dir of **Cedar Point Europe Comm GmbH**, which will handle the sales and deployments throughout Europe of Cedar Point's "Safari C3" multimedia switching system.

Marketing: **Style Net** launched Mon a nationwide brand awareness campaign, "Style. It's so you," across outdoor, print, radio and cable.



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BUSINESS & FINANCE

Public Affairs: E! expanded its "Play a Part" initiative through a partnership with the **Environmental Media Assoc.** The collaboration aims to increase public awareness of environmental issues. -- **CMT's** pro-social initiative **CMT One Country** launched "The Power of One," a campaign focused on motivating 1mln volunteers across the US by the end of '07.

People: **Gemstar** appointed former **HBO** exec **John High** svp, affil sales and marketing.

Clarification: Of course we didn't mean that **Starz** has actually vacated the cable/satellite business (**Cfax**, 11/17). **Bob Clasen** said **Starz** is expanding into other distribution and production businesses to aggregate large enough audiences across multiple platforms so it can generate sufficient revenues to create high quality programming. The **Starz** cable and satellite business will remain the cornerstone of the new **Starz**, he said.

Business/Finance: **Newport Media** announced the closing of \$30mln in Series C financing. **Newport** has to date raised more than \$66mln to develop **SoC** solutions designed to support all major mobile TV standards. -- **John Malone's Liberty** purchased a stake in Korean venture **GoPets** (gopets.net), which created a world where 3D 'pets' visit the desktops of members to socialize, play games and create worldwide friendships.

CableFAX Daily Stockwatch

Company	11/20 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	11/20 Close	1-Day Ch
BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS					
BRITISH SKY:	40.71	(0.3)	AVID TECH:	38.05	(0.88)
DIRECTV:	22.12	0.36	BLNDER TONGUE:	1.50	(0.03)
DISNEY:	33.12	0.18	BROADCOM:	37.00	2.01
ECHOSTAR:	36.05	(0.24)	C-COR:	10.23	0.39
GE:	35.98	(0.27)	CISCO:	27.11	0.18
HEARST-ARGYLE:	25.35	(0.14)	COMMScope:	31.69	0.17
ION MEDIA:	0.75	(0.02)	CONCURRENT:	1.84	0.00
NEWS CORP:	21.86	(0.23)	CONVERGYS:	24.49	(0.03)
TRIBUNE:	32.30	0.05	CSG SYSTEMS:	28.07	0.51
MSOS					
CABLEVISION:	27.80	(0.04)	GEMSTAR TVG:	3.27	0.04
CHARTER:	2.72	0.14	GOOGLE:	495.05	(3.74)
COMCAST:	40.79	0.50	HARMONIC:	8.12	(0.23)
COMCAST SPCL:	40.50	0.42	JDSU:	18.22	(0.11)
GCI:	14.92	(0.28)	LEVEL 3:	5.23	0.04
KNOLOGY:	10.00	(0.03)	LUCENT:	2.62	0.00
LIBERTY CAPITAL:	89.97	0.00	MICROSOFT:	29.89	0.49
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	27.21	(0.08)	MOTOROLA:	22.52	0.14
LIBERTY INTERACTIVE:	22.99	0.13	NDS:	47.81	(0.19)
MEDIACOM:	8.40	0.07	NORTEL:	2.02	(0.05)
NTL:	24.33	(1.05)	OPENTV:	2.58	0.11
ROGERS COMM:	58.04	0.38	PHILIPS:	37.41	0.03
SHAW COMM:	30.95	0.47	RENTRAK:	14.02	0.07
TIME WARNER:	20.58	0.15	SEACHANGE:	8.86	(0.14)
WASH POST:	734.60	0.81	SONY:	40.12	(0.67)
PROGRAMMING					
CBS:	29.78	(0.02)	SPRINT NEXTEL:	20.10	(0.16)
CROWN:	3.59	(0.18)	THOMAS & BETTS:	53.21	(0.47)
DISCOVERY:	15.47	(0.25)	TIVO:	6.25	(0.04)
EW SCRIPPS:	49.12	(0.38)	TOLLGRADE:	8.47	0.17
GRUPO TELEvisa:	24.69	0.15	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	21.25	(0.22)
INTERACTIVE CORP:	34.23	0.39	VONAGE:	6.70	(0.5)
LODGENET:	23.83	(0.16)	VYYO:	3.37	0.04
NEW FRONTIER:	9.20	(0.02)	WEBB SYS:	0.05	0.00
OUTDOOR:	12.72	0.21	WORLDGATE:	1.37	(0.02)
PLAYBOY:	11.96	0.03	YAHOO:	26.72	(0.19)
UNIVISION:	35.43	(0.01)	TELCOS		
VALUEVISION:	13.65	0.05	AT&T:	33.21	0.01
VIACOM:	39.08	(0.2)	BELLSOUTH:	43.55	(0.02)
WWE:	16.00	0.18	QWEST:	7.77	(0.16)
TECHNOLOGY					
3COM:	4.98	(0.03)	VERIZON:	34.67	(0.06)
ADC:	14.15	0.52	MARKET INDICES		
ADDVANTAGE:	3.92	0.03	DOW:	12316.54	(26.02)
AMDOCS:	38.31	0.39	NASDAQ:	2452.72	6.86
AMPHENOL:	67.55	(0.21)			
ARRIS GROUP:	12.52	0.08			



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M.C. Antil's CableFolks

A Trip Down Memory Lane

Like many in this industry, GSN president Rich Cronin and his online content guru, John Roberts, spend a lot of time on the road. And usually, when they're traveling, they're selling. But when I caught up with them recently, they weren't selling at all. They were giving something away.

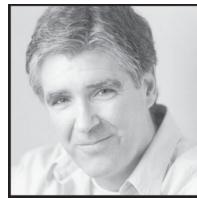
The two were part of a unique Cable Center program that sends senior execs—including many CEOs—onto campuses across the country to teach kids about our business. Rich and John visited Northwestern, just north of Chicago, and gave a full day of their time talking about GSN.

I attended a mid-afternoon session, and it was terrific for the audience, but hardly the kind of stuff that would make a trade editor stop the presses.

But near the end of the class, something interesting happened. Rich took off his GSN hat and started talking about life and how he was once in the kids' shoes. He told them about deciding in college he wanted to get into TV, and how he interned over summers as a cameraman. He talked about being torn over whether to transfer because Notre Dame did not have a radio and television department, and how he and his counselor sat down and pieced together a course schedule that closely replicated the requirements of such a degree.

As he talked you could feel something inside him rise and take wing. It was as though Rich had reconnected with the young man he had once been; the passionate would-be TV producer who wouldn't let some technicality like the fact his school didn't offer a degree in his major stand in his way. And if you've ever seen Rich speak in public, you can imagine he had them eating out of his hand.

Then came John's turn, and he talked about being so sure he wanted a job in TV that he drove cross country from his home in Upstate New York to L.A. At the time



M.C. Antil

he had no apartment, no job, no plan, no connections; just a burning desire and an indomitable will. John told the kids how one day he caught wind of this thing called the World Wide Web; how his techie roommate had told him that would change traditional media forever; and how he had gone out the next day, bought a book on the Internet, read it cover to cover, and immediately began positioning himself to prospective employers as a Web expert.

It was magical stuff, and the kids were mesmerized. And frankly, so was I. I had seen enough canned spiels in my life to know a raw, unscripted one—and this was it.

Later, I shared with Rich and John a tale of how I got my first job, and before you knew it we were sitting around like those three guys in “Jaws,” keeping the world at bay for an all-too-fleeting moment while we reflected on our pasts, told war stories and compared scars.

I finally asked them, why they'd give up so much valuable time to do this? Rich said, beyond the need to give something back to society, these kids represented a pool of talent from which an interactive company like his would have to draw.

John concurred, jokingly, saying: “These kids—they’re my peeps.”

We then laughed about one young man who after class went up and said he wanted to make a name for himself in sports television. I was standing there so I asked, “You want to work for ESPN?” He looked at me wide-eyed and said, “Heck, no. I want to take them on. I want to be the next Brian Bedol.”

Sounds like the kind of kid we need to keep this industry strong; the kind of kid who 30 years ago might have had enough moxie to invent his own major, or who 20 years ago might have had the vision to change his life based on nothing more than what he learned in the pages of a book.

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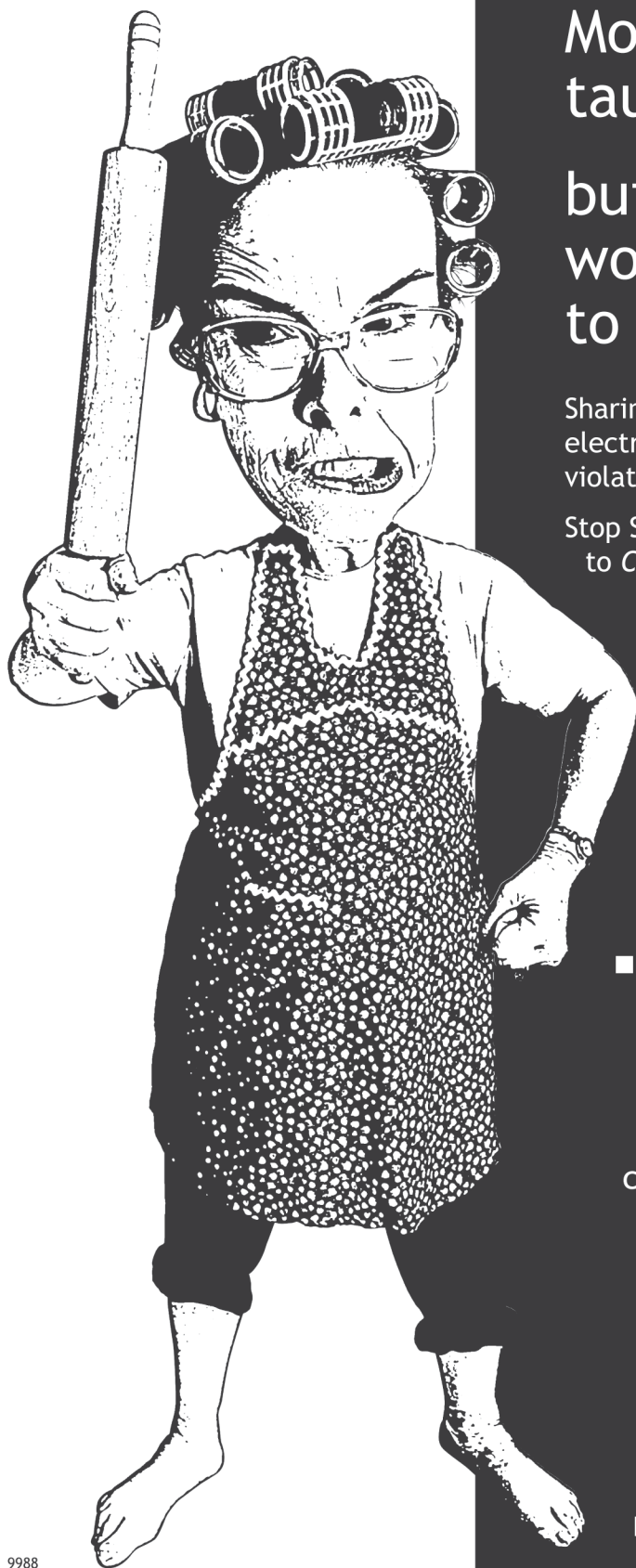
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