

# CableFAX Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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## Football Famine: Some Subs Miss Part of NFL Net Debut

Glitches during **NFL Net's** 1st live game telecast on Turkey Day were inevitable, but a blackout of more than 15 mins of action on an unknown number of **Comcast** systems was unexpected. Some Comcast markets reportedly couldn't view the telecast until some point during the game's 2nd quarter, and NFL Net received an "outrageous amount of feedback" from subs concerning this issue, said net spokesman *Seth Palansky*. He also said the MSO hasn't provided a "good answer" for the blackout. A Comcast spokeswoman said the HD feed for the game started late in a handful of regional systems, and that the problem was rectified immediately following awareness. She declined to reveal how many subs were affected but said standard-def subs were able to see the entire game. Aside from making sure that the upcoming Ravens-Bengals tilt transmits properly, the net plans myriad additional improvements for the net's Thurs night encore. "Top to bottom, there are 83 things that our production team wants to improve, but most of it is tweaking, not tearing up and starting over," said Palansky. Cited by published reports and/or Palansky, some chief issues include audio/picture quality and, to a lesser (and more subjective) extent, talent performance. A slew of Comcast subs also reported poor HD picture quality, which NFL Net engineers think originated within the **iN Demand Nets** feed used by Comcast, Palansky said. Comcast, according to the spokeswoman, isn't aware of any HD quality problems. Palansky said internal tech problems and the boisterous stadium atmosphere in Kansas City begat audio problems such as difficulty in hearing game commentary by *Bryant Gumbel* and *Cris Collinsworth*. The net largely addressed sound issues during the telecast and doesn't expect them to be a factor during upcoming games, he said. He added that Gumbel's presentation—which news outlets called everything from stilted and uninformed—will only improve. "We have received great feedback on Collinsworth, but Gumbel, as we expected, will take a little longer for viewers to get used to," said Palansky. While NFL Net won't receive official game ratings from **Nielsen** until after press time, preliminary estimates give the telecast a 2.3 HH rating, which would place it around 100th place in weekly cable rankings.

**Reading List:** Operators and programmers have been leaning on the **FCC** to act on cable's waiver requests for the July 1 set-top integration ban. Now the *WSJ* is adding some heat. In an editorial published Sat, the paper notes that FCC chmn *Kevin Martin's* inaction on the request has "a flavor of political payback," noting the run-ins he has had with the industry over a la carte and indecency. Remarking on the \$600m annual bill cable faces to comply with the rules, the *WSJ* wrote: "The Commission, and Mr. Martin, could do the economy a favor by worrying less about political gamesmanship and more about getting on with the deregulation the telecom industry needs."

**At the Portals:** **NCTC's** *Jeff Abbas* and **ACA's** *Matt Polka* have visited the **FCC** this month to press NCTC's complaint against **Fox Cable** as it tries to negotiate RSN agreements on behalf of members. The issue, they say, is becoming more urgent as several operators' RSN contracts expire at year-end. NCTC wants to negotiate the RSN

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deals on members' behalf but says the FCC needs to order that **News Corp** recognize it as a bargaining agent and allow it to receive confidential info from members to negotiate.

**Competition:** **AT&T's U-Verse** has started rolling out a few HD channels in San Antonio, including HDNet and NFL HD. A larger HD announcement is expected shortly. -- **Verizon** announced plans to establish a local video hub office in the Pittsburgh, PA, area and could begin offering its FiOS TV in the region late next year. The VHO will receive national programming via fiber-optic lines, and will also insert local programming like local TV and PEG channels. -- **AT&T** and **NBCU** announced a deal for the distribution of NBCU nets through the telco's **U-verse** video platform. The pact includes analog, digital and HD signals for channels such as **Sci Fi, USA** and **Bravo**, as well as VOD rights for feature films from **Universal**.

**Online:** **MTV Nets** will launch some 20 "hyper-programmed" broadband channels by mid-'07. The channels will cater to specific interests (like classic rock) or be tied to TV shows. An announcement is expected shortly on MTVN's older-skewing, multi-platform channels being headed by **John Sykes**.

**In the States:** Online streaming company **VDC.com** is delivering **Al Jazeera English** as part of its lineup of live streams of linear cable nets. -- **Comcast** will launch **ReelzChannel** in St Paul and Minneapolis on Thurs.

**VOD:** **New Line Cinema** wrapped up a multi-year VOD licensing deal with **TVN**, which will distribute its new release, library and direct-to-video titles. -- **Cox** will begin Fri rolling out 15 hours of **Oxygen on Demand** content in its digital markets.

**Cameras in Court:** The MD Supreme Court has decided to launch a project for live Webcasting of its sessions. It hopes to begin broadcasting arguments before Dec 4, when it's slated to hear a gay marriage case. **Court TV** News DC correspondent **Savannah Guthrie** said the net is thrilled by the news. "I hope this is just the first step toward full access in Maryland courts, including civil and criminal trial proceedings," she said. "Our country's founders intended for the court system to be open to all, and cameras enable a much wider audience to take advantage of that educational opportunity."

**Carriage:** **MTV Tr3s** inked an affiliation pact with **Bela Broadcasting** for broadcast stations in L.A. and Phoenix. The deal gives the fledgling Latino net viewership across the top 50 Hispanic DMAs in the country over broadcast, satellite and cable.

**Online:** **Fox Reality** will deliver free to **iTunes** the 1st ep of all of its upcoming original series roughly 1 week prior to their TV premiere, after which they will be available for regular price. For example, the debut ep of "My Bare Lady" will be available for free at iTunes.com Thurs, and after its Dec 7 net premiere will cost \$1.99.

**Advertising:** **Chrysler** renewed with **CNN Ad Sales** its multi-million dollar package as the sole corporate sponsor for CNN's coverage of Time's "Person of the Year" (Dec 16, 8pm). In addition to commercial spots during the broadcast, the package will include national tagged tune-ins promoting the show and Chrysler's sponsorship, on **CNN, Headline News**, and the **CNN Airport Network**. -- **Lincoln** signed on as the initial advertiser for **Gospel Mu-**

POSITION:

## FIRE HYDRANT

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ARE YOU IN POSITION?



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# BUSINESS & FINANCE

sic Channel's VOD service, available in more than 10mln HHs.


**Programming: Speed and Fox** joined forces for coverage through '09 of the "FIA Formula One World Championship," with Speed airing 13 racing events and Fox 4. -- **Fox News' Shepard Smith** is headed to Amman, Jordan to host special editions of "Studio B" and "The Fox Report," Tues-Thurs. -- **Sci Fi and RHI Ent** are partnering on "Tin Man" (Dec '07), a 6-hour miniseries offering a science fiction spin on "The Wizard of Oz."

**On the Circuit: Turner** svp and corporate controller/CAO **John Kampfe** and **Regent Comm** evp/CFO **Tony Vasconcellos** will serve as co-chairs of the 47th annual **BCFM/BCCA** conference, to be held May 22-24 in Las Vegas. Info and registration is available at [bcfm.com](http://bcfm.com) or 847/716-7000. -- Check out **Seth Arenstein's** podcast interview with former **NBC** newsman **John Palmer**, who is now on **Retirement Living TV**, at [Cable360.net](http://Cable360.net).

**People: Fox Cable Nets** promoted **Adam Holzer** to svp, integration and emerging media, responsible for all cross-platform sales, promotions, product integration, content tie-ins and other brand relationships. -- **MSG Media** appointed **Michael Guth** evp, marketing solutions. -- The **Mid-Atlantic Sports Net** appointed **Charlie Dunn** vp/general sales mgr and **John McGuinness** vp, integrated sales and marketing. -- **SCTE** named **Cathy Oakes** vp, finance and accounting.

## CableFAX Daily Stockwatch


Company	11/27 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	11/27 Close	1-Day Ch
<b>BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS</b>					
BRITISH SKY:	41.02	0.30	AVID TECH:	37.36	(1.32)
DIRECTV:	22.50	(0.08)	BLNDER TONGUE:	1.70	(0.18)
DISNEY:	32.59	(0.32)	BROADCOM:	34.42	(1.42)
ECHOSTAR:	35.46	(1.15)	C-COR:	9.91	(0.16)
GE:	35.45	(0.24)	CISCO:	25.80	(1.04)
HEARST-ARGYLE:	25.11	(0.12)	COMMSCOPE:	30.62	(1.31)
ION MEDIA:	0.68	(0.03)	CONCURRENT:	1.88	(0.03)
NEWS CORP:	21.42	(0.41)	CONVERGYS:	23.67	(0.87)
TRIBUNE:	31.96	(0.02)	CSG SYSTEMS:	26.66	(0.91)
<b>MSOS</b>					
CABLEVISION:	27.60	(0.18)	GEMSTAR TVG:	3.15	(0.11)
CHARTER:	2.76	0.00	GOOGLE:	484.75	(20.25)
COMCAST:	39.45	(0.3)	HARMONIC:	7.85	(0.5)
COMCAST SPCL:	39.25	(0.29)	JDSU:	18.50	(0.63)
GCI:	14.87	(0.08)	LEVEL 3:	5.00	(0.13)
KNOLOGY:	10.01	(0.06)	LUCENT:	2.53	(0.06)
LIBERTY CAPITAL:	88.53	(1.1)	MICROSOFT:	29.48	(0.28)
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	26.64	(0.17)	MOTOROLA:	21.84	(0.62)
LIBERTY INTERACTIVE:	22.32	(0.68)	NDS:	47.11	(0.74)
MEDIACOM:	8.20	(0.1)	NORTEL:	2.15	0.01
NTL:	23.68	(0.33)	OPENTV:	2.46	(0.05)
ROGERS COMM:	61.50	0.46	PHILIPS:	36.94	(0.69)
SHAW COMM:	31.34	(0.05)	RENTRAK:	14.56	(0.26)
TIME WARNER:	20.27	(0.22)	SEACHANGE:	8.43	(0.54)
WASH POST:	724.47	(10.53)	SONY:	38.68	(0.95)
<b>PROGRAMMING</b>					
CBS:	30.01	(0.28)	SPRINT NEXTEL:	19.76	(0.17)
CROWN:	3.29	(0.17)	THOMAS & BETTS:	51.14	(1.68)
DISCOVERY:	15.23	(0.17)	TIVO:	6.26	(0.18)
EW SCRIPPS:	48.43	(0.4)	TOLLGRADE:	8.50	(0.47)
GRUPO TELEVISA:	25.02	(0.11)	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	20.50	(0.31)
INTERACTIVE CORP:	35.46	(0.05)	VONAGE:	6.53	(0.14)
LODGENET:	22.90	0.29	VYYO:	3.96	(0.04)
NEW FRONTIER:	9.04	0.05	WEBB SYS:	0.04	0.00
OUTDOOR:	12.60	0.02	WORLDGATE:	1.34	(0.05)
PLAYBOY:	11.59	(0.28)	YAHOO:	27.27	(0.76)
UNIVISION:	35.44	0.06	<b>TELCOS</b>		
VALUEVISION:	13.18	(0.49)	AT&T:	32.68	0.01
VIACOM:	37.73	(1.32)	BELLSOUTH:	42.50	(0.19)
WWE:	15.90	(0.04)	QWEST:	7.56	(0.19)
<b>TECHNOLOGY</b>					
3COM:	4.50	(0.24)	VERIZON:	34.24	(0.51)
ADC:	14.20	(0.09)	<b>MARKET INDICES</b>		
ADVANTAGE:	3.86	(0.09)	DOW:	12121.71	(158.46)
AMDOCS:	37.39	(1.21)	NASDAQ:	2405.92	(54.34)
AMPHENOL:	66.32	(2.34)			
ARRIS GROUP:	11.93	(0.48)			



# #1

## Media Source for Planning What to Watch

But don't just take our word for it: *CTAM DVR and On Demand A&U Study, 2005*



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# Symonds Says...

After Thanksgiving dinner I sat down and reflected on the greatest gift in my life, my family.

I also started thinking about this industry, which has also been very good to me.

Sitting there, I found myself offering thanks for a number of things, a few of which in the spirit of the holiday I tried to look at in a positive light.



Curtis Symonds

For example:

I'm thankful to O.J. Simpson for serving as a touchstone for my life. Like the "Seinfeld" episode in which George does the opposite of everything his instincts tell him to do, as both a father and a black man, I look at everything O.J. does and realize the exact opposite is how I would like to live my life.

After all, I'd rather die that be an African American who is black only when it behooves him to be black, or a father willing to accept money for a television special that would force his children to relive the most unimaginable horror of all.

I'm thankful for all those Fox affiliates, many of them from tiny markets, who had the guts to stand up and say they were not going to run the O.J. special anyway; a grass-

roots protest that actually worked.

And I ask all my brothers and sisters on the operating side of the cable business, why is it when all these small broadcast stations were drawing a line in the sand and saying, "enough," you all sat there on your hands and said nothing?

Look, I know at some point first amendment protection might be important to your business interests, but "don't ask, don't tell" doesn't fly in the world of content distribution.

And shame on you for so blindly stepping so incredibly far over the line of human decency that you'd have to actually look behind you to find it.

I'm thankful that Fox, a network that at one point actually thought this special would be a good idea, received a double whammy for their willingness to sink to yet another record low on the sleaze scale.

Normally a show like this would get very bad press and very good ratings.

But somehow—and I cannot tell you how thankful I am for this—Fox managed to hit the daily double: all the bad press and none of the financial benefits.

I'm thankful that Michael Richards was able to remind people of color everywhere how much easier racism is to deal with when it's in your face.

When someone tells you that years ago, he could have you swinging at the end of a rope, you know where you stand with him.

It's just like a few years ago when Trent Lott let us momentarily peek behind the curtain of his public persona.

I'm also thankful to Jerry Seinfeld for reminding us that at the end of the day it's money, not principle, that drives who we are as a society.

After all, why would Seinfeld want to get anywhere near Richards during the worst of the fallout of his remarks?

Because they're friends?

Maybe that was part of it, but only part.

After all, the syndication rights to "Seinfeld" are a cash cow, and the guy who owns those rights was doing all he could to protect them.

And finally, I'm thankful that as we descend upon New York for the last major cable event of the year—the 2006 NAMIC Holiday Gala—there won't be any lack of conversation topics because of people like Simpson, Richards and the Fox programming department.

In fact, Symonds says we can just skip the small talk and get right down to it.

Curtis Symonds can be reached at [curtissymonds@yahoo.com](mailto:curtissymonds@yahoo.com).

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