

# CableFAX Daily™

Tuesday — February 11, 2014

What the Industry Reads First

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## Redefine the Headline: HLN's Hecht Discusses Net's Social Media Rebrand

When **CNN Worldwide** pres *Jeff Zucker* keynoted **RealScreen Summit** last month, he hinted that a rebrand of **HLN** would be coming soon, but he added it was important that the net not entirely stray from its mission of news and headlines. On Mon, we learned how HLN is reinterpreting what that means as it announced a rebrand that it says will make it the first TV net for the social media generation, with headlines ripped not from newspapers but from plugged-in sites and blogs, viral events, social stars, and so on. The transition will be gradual over the next 6 months, starting with the launch Mon night (2/10, 10pm ET) of "RightThisMinute," a daily broadcast devoted to captivating web videos and the stories behind them. We talked to HLN evp, gm *Albie Hecht* about what's ahead, which includes everything from game shows to follow-docs to non-fiction shows. **Given the pace of social media and the non-traditional viewing pattern of millennials, this seems tough, no?** No question it's a bit of an uphill battle, but to me it's also a huge opportunity because there is a white space there. News and information in the digital age has changed, and the only real big, growing audience for it is younger millennials. It's just that they experience the news differently. How do we take that passion for this news and information and technology and bring it to our brand? To me, that's bringing social media sensibilities, bringing the stories, bringing the stories behind the stories, bringing the inspiration... We'll present the content you want and in a way you're passionate about, and we'll actually put you on television because you're the ones who will be driving the content of the network. **Sometimes social media buzz doesn't necessarily mean it's the biggest news of the day. Is that OK?** I think it's OK. That's part of the differentiation. It's news that you share, so it will have a different context than breaking news of a magazine, newspaper or television station that's oriented more towards world politics, world events... It will probably be more of an editorial point of view than pure news. It'll be funnier, informative, with some social DNA to it. **There are other nets going after millennials—Fusion, Participant's Pivot TV. What do you think sets HLN apart?** One thing is we're a fully distributed network. When you have [nearly 100mln] subscribers, you start off with a position of strength that no one else has, certainly not Pivot or Fusion... We have a ratings base that we can build off. That the 2nd thing. And 3rd, we have the biggest and best news gathering organization in the world. To be able to take those resources and use them a little differently, I think is going to be a very powerful and dynamic combination. **But what about your established audience, who may not be big social media connoisseurs—like my dad who watches Nancy Grace.** I think we're going to build a broader audience. Nancy has a huge social media audience, and she gets a lot of her stories from social media actually... So, I think broadening out her audience, broadening out Robin Meade's audience to embrace this is actually going to make for a bigger crowd than we currently have. **Do you have to get distributors to sign off on the rebrand because you're changing your focus?** No, we're still HLN. We're still news and information. And to me, one of the things I think operators will be excited about is that we're actually giving them and their audiences more value by giving them different form of news and information than they currently have.

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**1Gig:** Move over, **AT&T** and **Google Fiber**. Overbuilder **Grande** also is readying a 1-Gigabit Internet service in Austin. It will commence offering service, dubbed "Power 1000," on Feb 18, charging \$64.99. "Grande, a TX-based company, has been serving Austin for over a decade and we are proud to be the first to actually deliver the unbelievable speed of 1 Gigabit Internet service to our home market," said Grande pres *Matt Murphy*. In Dec, AT&T began launching its U-verse with GigaPower, starting at \$70/month. Initial speeds are up to 300Mbps, with plans to reach speeds up to 1 Gigabit per sec this year. Grande is also upgrading existing customers' Internet speeds. Those with service below 15Mbps, will get Power 15Mbps. Customers with 30 Mbps will go to Power 50 Mbps and those with 65 Mbps will jump to 75 Mbps.

**Weather-DirectTV:** One of the complaints from subs over **DirecTV** dropping **Weather Channel** was that replacement net **WeatherNation** didn't give them the local weather they wanted. On Mon, WeatherNation announced a slate of new services, including "Local Weather Now," which lets customers access local weather anytime. Customers tuned to WeatherNation can press the red button on their remotes for instant local weather conditions. Later this week, short-term and extended weather forecasts by zip code will run automatically on the channel every 10 minutes. Launching in early Mar is "Severe Weather Mix," which provides 6 channels of interactive weather coverage on one screen during major events. Meanwhile, Weather Channel continues its "Storm DirecTV" campaign at [keeptheweatherchannel.com](http://keeptheweatherchannel.com). *Ad Age* reported that the net this week will roll out a commercial this week playing on DirecTV's ongoing "Get rid of cable" campaign. "When you have DirecTV, you get a lot of channels. When you get a lot of channels, you expect the Weather Channel. When you don't get the Weather Channel, you call to cancel DirecTV," the spot begins.

**Walkers Beat Olympians:** The zombies might walk slow but they beat the Olympians Sun night among adult viewers. **AMC's** "The Walking Dead" mid-season premiere scored 15.8mln viewers and 10.4mln 18-49s, making it the #1 telecast for the night among the demo. It received an 8.2 rating among 18-49s vs **NBC's** Olympics rating of 6.9 in the demo. The premiere marks the most-watched mid-season premiere for the show, though it came in slightly behind the 16.1mln who tuned in for its season premiere last Oct. After show "Talking Dead" reported its highest premiere in series history with 5.9mln viewers, including 3.9mln 18-49, though it's down slightly from the 6mln who watched the mid-season finale. Walkers also dominated TV-related Twitter activity: The premiere was the #1 show of the night on Twitter across all cable and broadcast nets with 1.24mln show-related tweets from 526,174 unique authors, generating 68.4mln impressions, according to **Nielsen SocialGuide**. The episode was also the top program for the day in TV-related Twitter activity.

**Sochi Ratings:** Since the start of primetime coverage on Feb 6, 106.5mln Americans have watched the Sochi Winter Games on **NBCU** nets. For the Fri Opening Ceremony and Sat Day 1 programming, 97.3mln total American viewers tuned in, up from 96.7mln for the opening Fri and Sat of the 2010 Winter games and 88.4mln in 2006.

**Advertising:** In a first-of-its-kind deal, **Lexus** launched a new branded interactive channel across **Comcast's** Xfinity VOD platforms, showcasing 2014 vehicles. Comcast subs can access the channel directly from interactive overlays on Lexus TV spots and through IPG banners. The channel and online experience, created in collaboration with **Comcast Spotlight** business unit **Comcast Media 360**, offers original branded content, photo galleries and the ability to request an e-brochure.

**Programming:** **CNN** is bringing on board **MSNBC** contributor/"Hardball" guest host *Michael Smerconish* as host of a new weekly program that will air live on Sat mornings from NY. He'll continue hosting his **SiriusXM** Radio show. -- **Out-**

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# BUSINESS & FINANCE

door Channel will begin showing "The Fowl Life with *Chad Belding*" in late June/early July. Now in its 6th season, it documents Belding and crew's pursuit of waterfowl. -- Now averaging 3.5mln total viewers since its Jan 22 debut, **A&E** booked 18 more eps of reality series "Wahlburgers." The show features *Mark Wahlberg* and his brothers expanding their Boston burger restaurant business. -- **HGTV** will showcase the stakes of competitive real estate dealmaking in its 2 new series in March: "Flip It to Win It," a multi-team competition that premieres on Mar 4, and "New House, New Life," which debuts on Mar 6.

**On the Circuit:** **AXS TV** will bring together an unlikely menagerie of celebs and rock stars for a Valentine's Day benefit at L.A.'s House of Blues. *Penn Gillette* will host the event to benefit **MendingKids.org** (providing surgical care to children worldwide), with guest appearances by *KISS*, *Arsenio Hall*, *Tom Jones*, *Natasha Bedingfield*, *Kenny Wayne Shepherd*, *Vintage Trouble*, *Brenna Whitaker* and others. AXS TV will air the Feb 14 show live at 11pm ET.

**People:** **A&E** named former **VH1** exec *Shelly Tatro* as svp, dev & programming. -- Ex-**NBCU**er *Leslie Isaacs* was named vp, West Coast ad sales for **TVGN**. The net also hired *Takashi Nakano*, formerly of **Scripps Nets Interactive**, as vp, content distribution. -- **Sundance TV** promoted *Katie Lanegran* to vp, PR.

## CableFAX Daily Stockwatch

Company	02/10 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	02/10 Close	1-Day Ch
<b>BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS</b>					
21ST CENTURY FOX:	32.15	(0.09)	GOOGLE:	1172.93	(4.51)
DIRECTV:	70.76	0.48	HARMONIC:	6.45	(0.01)
DISH:	57.02	0.22	INTEL:	24.29	0.09
DISNEY:	77.06	1.39	JDSU:	13.39	0.12
GE:	25.05	(0.14)	LEVEL 3:	36.76	0.01
<b>MSOS</b>					
CABLEVISION:	16.40	0.16	MICROSOFT:	36.80	0.24
CHARTER:	137.62	0.12	NIELSEN:	45.13	0.95
COMCAST:	54.35	(0.29)	RENTRAK:	64.98	0.81
COMCAST SPCL:	52.15	(0.37)	SEACHANGE:	11.56	UNCH
GCI:	9.45	UNCH	SONY:	16.68	(0.14)
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	82.20	0.33	SPRINT NEXTEL:	7.69	(0.33)
LIBERTY INT:	27.28	(0.16)	TIVO:	12.07	0.04
SHAW COMM:	22.77	(0.23)	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	34.66	(0.88)
TIME WARNER CABLE:	135.70	0.35	VONAGE:	4.40	(0.08)
<b>PROGRAMMING</b>					
AMC NETWORKS:	64.89	1.25	YAHOO:	37.76	0.53
CBS:	60.59	0.09	<b>TELCOS</b>		
CROWN:	2.96	(0.01)	AT&T:	32.44	0.14
DISCOVERY:	82.38	(0.38)	VERIZON:	46.91	0.10
GRUPO TELEVISA:	29.37	(0.13)	<b>MARKET INDICES</b>		
HSN:	54.48	(0.47)	DOW:	15801.79	7.71
INTERACTIVE CORP:	67.08	0.11	NASDAQ:	4148.17	22.31
LIONSGATE:	32.50	(0.61)	S&P 500:	1799.84	2.82
MADISON SQUARE GARDEN:	58.81	1.42			
SCRIPPS INT:	75.80	(0.5)			
STARZ:	29.14	0.27			
TIME WARNER:	63.65	(0.26)			
VALUEVISION:	5.72	(0.06)			
VIACOM:	82.63	0.57			
WWE:	22.32	(0.82)			
<b>TECHNOLOGY</b>					
ADVANTAGE:	3.14	0.21			
ALCATEL LUCENT:	4.37	(0.11)			
AMDOCS:	43.50	0.16			
AMPHENOL:	87.03	(0.33)			
AOL:	45.76	(1.52)			
APPLE:	528.99	9.31			
ARRIS GROUP:	25.92	(0.13)			
AVID TECH:	6.85	(0.05)			
BLNDER TONGUE:	0.95	0.01			
BROADCOM:	30.59	0.13			
CISCO:	22.83	0.16			
CONCURRENT:	8.49	(0.02)			
CONVERGYS:	19.33	(0.26)			
CSG SYSTEMS:	26.56	(0.32)			
ECHOSTAR:	48.11	0.94			

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# CableFAX TECH

## Live Sports Streaming: Fox Sports' Take

Live streaming of major sports events like the Super Bowl only started 2 years ago, when **NBC** drew 346K online viewers per minute on average. Last year, **CBS's** streaming pulled in 508K viewers per minute for the championship. This year, **Fox** scored 528K average viewers per minute through its Fox Sports Go app, up 4% YOY. Among digital metrics studied by **Fox Sports'** svp of mobile and advanced platforms *Clark Pierce* was the 1.1mln concurrent users (peak audience) during the 3rd quarter of the game. The metric "aligns nicely with what we do on the broadcast side," Pierce told us. He said other key metrics include the number of streams per use and the average time viewers spend on the app. During Super Bowl, users spent an average of 47.8 mins watching the live stream. Normally, "the smaller the screen, the shorter the session," Pierce said, noting users would "snack" content on phones and view longer-form content on tablets and PCs. And since this year's Super Bowl was the 1st major streaming event for Fox Sports Go, launched in Oct, numbers weren't the only things that matter. "The main goal going into it was to promote the app and create awareness... and we achieved it," Pierce said. Fox owns online and tablet streaming rights of Super Bowl while Verizon Wireless has exclusive phone rights. Viewers of live sports streaming are the same people who would "check scores on their mobile devices when they are at the post office or airport" and instead of checking scores, they are checking the live game, Pierce said. The 1.1mln peak audience was still a relatively small number compared to the game's average TV audience of 112.2mln and not even close to the all-time record for a live-streamed event: **Red Bull Stratos** space jump in Oct '12, which drew more than 8mln concurrent viewers on **YouTube**. "We anticipated an audience of that size, so we were ready for it," Pierce said. Teaming with **Akamai Technologies**, Fox Sports' standard streaming practice relies on adaptive bit rate techniques to deliver video profiles of up to 3 Mbps and as low as 100 Kbps to

PCs, and between 4 Mbps and 110 Kbps through the iPad app. Here's a question for the engineers: What happens when half or more of Super Bowl viewers decide to watch the game online or on mobile devices? Would networks today have enough capacity to handle it? For now, **NBC Sports'** streaming capacity will be tested as it has scheduled to stream more than 1K hours of live Sochi Olympics programs as well as Premier League contest, some of which will occur during the Winter Games. The net has promised to stream all Premiere League matches via NBC Sports Live Extra. All eyes are on NBC now.

**Sochi Effect:** The Opening Ceremony of the London Olympics had quite an effect on overall broadband traffic, especially in the US, while the ceremony for Sochi Olympics on Fri didn't appear to have had the same hold on broadband streamers. This according to bandwidth management firm **Procera Networks**, which analyzed broadband traffic across fixed and wireless ISPs. The impact of the streaming for Fri was minimal, the firm said. Specifically, **Netflix** took little hit in bandwidth usage from the norm, unlike the 2012 Olympics. "None of the networks that we looked at had any statistically significant increase or drop from normal rates, and **YouTube** was similarly unaffected," the company said. However, Olympic streaming in the northern part of North America did increase, representing 10% of overall streaming during a peak time on a large cable op's network. That compared to the less than 1% of total streaming traffic on a large cable op's network in the southern US. A comparison of regional ISPs that spanned fixed, mobile and a wireless ISPs showed that mobile usage was "extremely low, WISP usage was spotty and fixed was consistent," Procera said.

**People:** Video ad firm **AdGorilla** named *Lenny Melamedas* as evp to oversee services for customers including cable MSOs. Melamedas was most recently vp at video software firm **enableTV** and has held exec positions at **Harris, Liberty Media, PBS and Columbia Pictures**.



## Sales Executive of the Year Awards

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