

Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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Network Makeover: TVGN to Rebrand as POP

The scrolling list of TV programs is long gone, and it has been years since **TVGN** had any ties to TV Guide magazine, website or app. So perhaps it makes a sense that the net is finally ditching those 4 letters. In 1Q, TVGN will transform into **POP**. There was some discussion over whether to completely revolutionize the brand, a la **Style's** move to **Esquire**, or to just refresh it. With ratings on the rise, owners **CBS** and **Lionsgate** opted to keep TVGN's focus on entertainment and the world of fandom. "What kept popping up for us is that this is an amazing time to be a fan. Fandom is exploding—Comic Con has never been bigger. We're seeing it with musical festivals like Coachella getting so big they have to go to two week-ends. We're seeing it with TV shows. If you're a fan of 'Scandal,' you're a Gladiator. We noticed this really optimistic spirit with fandom," said *Brad Schwartz*, TVGN's president, entertainment and media. "We thought if we could look at the world through the eyes of a fan, if we could be a channel that celebrates the fan, that it would be a very unique media personality." Fans of sibling CBS' "Big Brother" already flock to the net for "Big Brother After Dark." **AMC's** "Talking Dead" and **Bravo's** "Watch What Happens: Live" has shown there is a real audience for fan after shows, but Schwartz promises POP will be much more than that. The upcoming programming lineup even includes a scripted series (details to come soon). Other programming includes the existing half-hour news series "Popsugar Now" (no relation to name change) and the upcoming "Rock the Boat: New Kids on the Block," a series about a fan cruise with the now-grown boy band. With a brand refresh instead of a complete flip of the channel, TVGN won't have to renegotiate terms with distributors. The net's in more than 80mln homes, with deals with most of the major MVPDs (**Cablevision** remains a hold-out). While the new name has the obvious connection to pop culture, that wasn't the thought behind the name change. "When something is so good, it pops," Schwartz said. "It's far bigger than trending, it's popping. 'Pop culture' is almost a nice kind of happy accident for us. For us, pop is that unique personality, that thing that stands above the rest." The net's target audience will stay the same—25-54s, particularly those in their mid-to-late 30s, a group Schwartz calls "modern day grown-ups." "I think there would have been a great entrepreneurial opportunity to re-imagine TV Guide for a new day, but we didn't even get a chance to think about that [because we didn't own the brand]," Schwartz said. "So, let's take the seat belt off, open the box and dream what we could be... Leaving that TVGN behind is certainly a way to portray that new, exciting brand we want to be."

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CFX TV Innovation Summit: Peter Stern, Time Warner Cable evp and chief product, people and strategy officer, challenged the audience at our TV Innovation Summit Thurs to not let innovation be a reactive strategy. “Most changes in [the TV business model] took place when programmers perceived a crisis,” he said, pointing to VOD as a response to DVR fears and suggested TV Everywhere began to take off in response to consumer cord-cutting. “Let’s not wait for a crisis,” he told the crowd. **DirectTV’s** Tim Gibson echoed the sentiment: “Our industry doesn’t fail well,” he said, challenging distributors and programmers to not be afraid to experiment with consumers and see what sticks. The full-day conference touched on everything from micro-targeted advertising to wireless opportunities. Musing on what the next big shakeup will be in the industry, consultant **Bridget Baker** said it will occur “the day when the distributors decide they can’t pay that much money” for programming because they’re losing consumers’ payments, at which point content creators will have to decide whether they can create content on less money. Partner at **Covington & Burling Robyn Polashuk** said a shift will occur when the industry figures out “how to monetize different modes of viewing.”

Merger Comments: ACA voiced its concern about the **AT&T-DirectTV** deal in an **FCC** filing this week. The merger “unites substantial video programming and distribution assets,” and the FCC has routinely found that an MVPD owning “Must Have” programming has an incentive and ability to raise its rivals’ programming costs, ACA said, arguing DirectTV already has a strong incentive and ability to charge higher programming prices to its rivals for its RSNs. In addition, the proposed deal would increase “the vertical harms of DirectTV’s ownership of must-have programming assets” and AT&T’s increased bargaining power would hurt MVPD competitors and their subs, ACA said. -- Cable ad firm **Viamedia** fired back at **Comcast** in a filing with the **FCC** on the **Comcast-Time Warner Cable** merger. Comcast recently responded to Viamedia’s complaint and proposed conditions of the merger, saying the company’s concern is driven by its own business objectives instead of a legitimate concern about competition. “As noted, cable advertising is just a small part of the local advertising marketplace, and advertisers have numerous local options both on television and elsewhere,” Comcast said. Viamedia’s advocacy is consistent with the concerns expressed by much of the cable advertising industry, as supported in comments from the **American Cable Association, RCN Telecom Services, LLC/Grande Communications Networks, LLC, and CenturyLink,**” the company said. The merger would eliminate the existing competition between **Comcast Spotlight** and **TWC Media Sales** and would allow Comcast to force smaller MVPDs to enter into spot cable ad representation contracts with Comcast in cases where MVPD needs access to all of the Interconnects...” Viamedia said.

TiVo’s Plan: TiVo’s ambition is way beyond just being the DVR provider these days. CFO **Naveen Chopra** envisioned a world in which a TiVo app is all subs need to access linear and OTT content. Speaking at **MKM Partners’** investor conference Thurs, he said “there is a way in the future where a device can be very thin or built into TVs and all content is stored in the cloud.” To get there, content rights issues will be a bigger challenge than technology, he said. Today, partnering with MSOs is still “very very critical. They are the most effective content bundlers out there.” Without a cable or satellite signal, “you are only part of the experience... We are still heavily dependent on the set-top boxes.” Meanwhile, the company is heavily engaged with Amazon for its new Roamio Over-the-Air DVR, a \$49.99 device that allows users with no pay-TV subscription to access programming. TiVo is making strides internationally, having surpassed 2.5mln subs in EU earlier this year thanks largely to rollouts by **Virgin Media** in the UK, **Com Hem** in Sweden and **Ono** in Spain. Unlike the US market where “value is all in broadband,” the EU market uses video as THE differentiator, the CTO said. It took a while for TiVo to crack the EU video market but “once we get in, we get in big.” Moving forward, Latin America market is high on TiVo’s international expansion list.

Wheeler Speaks: Sept 15th marked the close of the comment period for the **FCC’s** Open Internet order. “We are closely examining the issues and reviewing the public record, which includes more than 3 million comments, the largest body of comments for any FCC rulemaking proceeding,” FCC chmn **Tom Wheeler** told the House small business committee Wed during a hearing on the Commission’s policy on small business and rural America. The agency started a series of 6 public roundtable forums this week soliciting views on enforceable Open Internet rules. “As this process moves forward, we will continue to enforce our Open Internet Transparency rule, which was upheld in court and is an important tool to help small businesses make informed choices about the Internet access services they buy.” Wheeler told the panel.

Kaitz Dinner: Wed night’s **Walter Kaitz** fundraising dinner raised \$1.4mln for the industry’s diversity efforts. **NCTA** pres/ CEO **Michael Powell** told attendees to look at the unrest in Ferguson, MO, a town that is roughly 70% African-American,

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but who has a police force and representatives who are overwhelmingly white. “Do we need stronger evidence of the critical importance of diversity?” he asked. “When you fail on the diversity front, you sow the seeds of distrust.” The dinner recognized FCC commish *Mignon Clyburn* with the Diversity Advocate award. “I do not take this award lightly,” she said, adding that in her definition of advocate always includes service. *Debra Lee* accepted the Diversity Champion Award on behalf of **BET Networks**. “It will inspire us to keep reaching higher,” Lee said. The BET chmn/CEO challenged the entire industry to “look around their company, especially the executive table” and make sure it mirrors how the world looks now and will look in the future.

Research: Disabling fast forwarding during VOD viewing has no negative impact on the viewing experience or viewers’ intent to continue using VOD. Instead, it would benefit advertising, according to a study commissioned by **A+E Networks** and conducted by **MediaScience**. The study found that ad impact improves “dramatically” when fast forwarding is disabled, with viewer aided-recall of ads increasing by more than 50%. In addition, there’s no reduction to program engagement, and no change in VOD usage intent, satisfaction or service utility.

People: *Starz* upped *Stacey Liebrecht* and *Michael Messina* to vps in creative services for *Starz* and **Starz Digital Media**.

CableFAX Daily Stockwatch

Company	09/18 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	09/18 Close	1-Day Ch
BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS			CONVERGYS:18.82.....0.19		
DIRECTV:	87.25	0.04	CSG SYSTEMS:	26.99	0.19
DISH:	65.54	(1.17)	ECHOSTAR:	51.27	0.14
ENTRAVISION:	4.40	0.03	GOOGLE:	589.27	4.50
GRAY TELEVISION:	8.97	(0.12)	HARMONIC:	6.71	0.12
MEDIA GENERAL:	15.20	(0.05)	INTEL:	35.17	0.19
NEXSTAR:	44.33	0.33	INTERACTIVE CORP:	68.91	(0.07)
SINCLAIR:	27.14	(0.23)	JDSU:	13.71	0.14
MSOS			LEVEL 3:	47.50	1.66
CABLEVISION:	19.01	(0.25)	MICROSOFT:	46.68	0.16
CHARTER:	162.09	(0.1)	NIELSEN:	44.49	(0.02)
COMCAST:	56.85	(0.24)	RENTRAK:	54.91	2.90
COMCAST SPCL:	56.59	(0.22)	SEACHANGE:	7.36	0.05
GCI:	11.04	0.01	SONY:	18.04	(0.84)
GRAHAM HOLDING:	733.01	(0.33)	SPRINT NEXTEL:	6.85	0.16
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	43.50	0.19	TIVO:	13.40	(0.08)
LIBERTY INT:	28.87	(0.06)	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	52.38	(0.18)
SHAW COMM:	25.82	0.06	VONAGE:	3.45	0.05
TIME WARNER CABLE:	153.51	(1.11)	YAHOO:	42.09	(0.51)
PROGRAMMING			TELCOS		
21ST CENTURY FOX:	34.91	0.26	AT&T:	35.16	0.14
AMC NETWORKS:	61.53	0.39	CENTURYLINK:	40.52	0.17
CBS:	56.50	(0.34)	TDS:	25.75	(0.04)
CROWN:	3.26	0.02	VERIZON:	49.69	0.48
DISCOVERY:	39.97	0.02	MARKET INDICES		
DISNEY:	90.34	0.01	DOW:	17265.99	109.14
GRUPO TELEVISA:	35.42	0.23	NASDAQ:	4593.43	31.24
HSN:	59.58	(0.01)	S&P 500:	2011.36	9.79
LIONSGATE:	33.45	(0.11)			
MSG:	65.95	(0.19)			
SCRIPPS INT:	78.23	0.18			
STARZ:	30.45	0.13			
TIME WARNER:	77.38	0.52			
VALUEVISION:	5.50	(0.01)			
VIACOM:	80.48	0.90			
WWE:	14.98	0.36			
TECHNOLOGY					
ADDVANTAGE:	2.38	(0.09)			
AMDOCS:	47.88	0.26			
AMPHENOL:	105.32	0.86			
AOL:	43.66	1.40			
APPLE:	101.79	0.21			
ARRIS GROUP:	30.77	0.10			
AVID TECH:	10.34	0.05			
BLNDER TONGUE:	1.40	0.05			
BROADCOM:	41.44	0.51			
CISCO:	25.22	0.01			
CONCURRENT:	7.80	0.07			



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PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

More Than Just Black & White

The departure of popular, sketch comedy series “Chappelle’s Show” from the air in 2006 made the relative lack of ethnic diversity in late-night comedy television, on both broadcast and cable channels, even more obvious than it had been previously. So, when **Comedy Central** rolled out the 1st season of “Key and Peele” in 2012, there were many critics who expected the show’s two biracial hosts (*Keegan-Michael Key* and *Jordan Peele*) to pick up where *Dave* had left off. The show, now in its 4th season (premiering Wed, 10:30pm), has proven itself worthy of its own reputation for relevant and savvy, racially inclusive humor with an African-American POV. To gain some insight into how they’ve managed to walk such a precarious (and hilarious) line, **Cablefax** spoke to executive producer *Jay Martel*. “We’ve been given a lot of freedom by our audience... [the freedom] to talk about the things that we want to talk about and not be constrained by any sort of backlash or anything,” he said. This freedom has motivated sketches that consistently push the envelope and test America’s ability to laugh at itself. Among them, 2 sketches airing in the Season 4 premiere featuring stereotype-bashing rednecks conversing positively about the contributions of minority groups and the humorous misconceptions of a black family gearing up for their first gay wedding. Martel has no qualms with admitting the comedic liberties Key and Peele’s personal backgrounds afford the show. Many of their jokes poke fun at race relations in a way only two people who have dealt with race their whole lives could get away with. When asked about the daring quality of their sketches and their tendency to feel like they’re promoting social consciousness, Martel said, “It’s just the nature of when you’re a comedy writer thinking about what’s going on in the world.” – *Ashley Powell*

Reviews: “The Bridge,” Wed, 10pm, **FX**. The plotlines have grown more complicated with each episode of this crime series, which began with a body (or bodies?) recovered on a bridge linking the US and Mexico. Despite the complexity, its gritty, realistic tone—many scenes are in Spanish—and the work of Mexican actor *Demián Bichir* have hooked us. Bichir’s Mexican officer is teamed with an American cop, played by *Diane Kruger*. This week finds Bichir’s character paying a hefty price as Kruger’s *Sonya Cross* faces unlikely enemies. -- “Cedar Cove,” Sat, 8p, **Hallmark**. On many Saturday nights, social media explodes with buzz about “Cedar Cove,” Hallmark’s 1st scripted series, which, in Season 2, has continued to pull top ratings in time period, HH and W25-54. Its appeal is obvious—the large cast, led by *Andie MacDowell*, is beautiful. The port town of Cedar Cove is gorgeous, too. But looks can deceive—there’s soapy drama aplenty, involving love triangles, stalking and, oh my, cyberbullying. Is Cedar Cove light or weightless? The ratings prove that for many viewers it doesn’t matter. -- “Sports Jeopardy!” premiere, Wed, **Crackle**. *Dan Patrick* deftly hosts a sports version of the iconic quiz show. In short, it’s a home run, a new addiction for sports fans. Why did cable sports networks let Crackle grab this one? – *Seth Arenstein*

Basic Cable Rankings (9/08/14-9/14/14)			
Mon-Sun Prime			
ESPN	1	1.3	3157
FOXN	2	0.8	1918
TBSC	3	0.7	1848
USA	3	0.7	1795
DSNY	3	0.7	1722
FX	6	0.6	1507
HIST	6	0.6	1495
TNT	6	0.6	1475
HGTV	6	0.6	1393
FAM	10	0.5	1102
DISC	11	0.4	1065
ADSM	11	0.4	1052
A&E	11	0.4	1023
SYFY	11	0.4	993
FOOD	11	0.4	923
LIFE	11	0.4	916
TLC	11	0.4	863
DSE	11	0.4	92
AMC	19	0.3	805
NAN	19	0.3	802
SPK	19	0.3	779
ID	19	0.3	689
VH1	19	0.3	681
BRAV	19	0.3	653
MSNB	19	0.3	631
MTV	19	0.3	627
HALL	19	0.3	621
WETV	19	0.3	620
NFLN	19	0.3	605
OWN	19	0.3	563
DSJR	19	0.3	537
CMDY	32	0.2	603
CNN	32	0.2	547
APL	32	0.2	530
TVLD	32	0.2	520
NGC	32	0.2	520
TRU	32	0.2	518
TRAV	32	0.2	462
NKJR	32	0.2	456
BET	32	0.2	439
LMN	32	0.2	437
ESP2	32	0.2	428
FXX	32	0.2	401
EN	32	0.2	401
WGNA	32	0.2	399
OXYG	32	0.2	395

*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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