

Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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2014 Ratings Winner: ESPN Bumps USA Out of the Top Spot

Move over **USA**. In yet another sign that it hasn't been the best ratings year for cable, general entertainment networks were trumped by **ESPN**, with the sports net ranking as the top cable net in prime for 2014. ESPN averaged 2.3mln total viewers in prime through Dec 28, putting it slightly ahead of USA's 2.1mln. That means no 9th consecutive win for USA and it fits with sports being must-have programming. **TNT** and **Disney** were neck-and-neck averaging 2mln viewers and 1.9mln, respectively. Cable ratings have fallen pretty much across the board this year. USA is down 21% from last year's 2.68mln viewers. ESPN is an exception with number actually up 5% vs its 2.2mln avg last year. TNT's viewership is off 4%, while Disney is down 22% YOY. Top 20 networks bucking the trend include **Discovery** (+2% to 1.4mln) and **HGTV** (+5% to 1.3mln). The biggest decliner among the top 20 is **A&E** (-30% to 1.3mln), followed by Disney and USA. In total day, **Nick** and Disney tied with a 0.6 rating among P2+, but Nick had a higher delivery average (1.5mln vs 1.4mln). Both children nets are down from last year's total day delivery numbers (1.77mln for Nick and 1.72mln for Disney). **Bernstein Research** analysts said recently that they believe the US media sector is facing its biggest crisis since 2009 as audiences for ad-supported TV are moving quickly to non-ad-supported platforms. "While we continue to believe the pay-tv bundle provides the greatest value of any entertainment product ever conceived, and will continue to be the staple of how premium video entertainment is acquired in the US, we agree there are more risks now than ever," said a Bernstein research report by *Todd Juenger*. "Determined consumers can come closer to replicating the bundle by cobbling together other video sources (if they don't care about sports). It's still clunky and doesn't save nearly as much money as it seems it would, but it is undeniably getting easier." And therein is the theme for 2015... There is hope, with Bernstein maintaining outperform ratings on several programmers (**21st Century Fox**, **Disney** and **Time Warner**—common denominators among the trio include sports and a significant intl presence). While networks have acknowledged some ratings declines, they also have blamed **Nielsen's** decision this year to include broadband-only homes in its sampling—thus, it's not possible to do a true, year-over-year comparison. With Nielsen just beginning to

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annual power player list?

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100
Cablefax

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It's free to enter – but you must submit your nominations by January 30.

Enter at www.cablefax.com/awards



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measure services such as Netflix, 2015 is shaping up to be an interesting year when it comes to numbers.

Carriage/Retrans Countdown: At our deadline, we were a few hours away from 12:01am Jan 1—that magical moment when many cable network agreements and retrans consent contracts expire. It's impossible to predict what will happen, but there were promising signs that **NBCU** would not go dark on **Cable One**. And **DirectTV** wasn't expected to lose AMC, whose contract also was up Dec 31. On the retrans side, there were a few broadcasters warning of possible blackouts. **Mission Broadcasting** told **Charter** subs they could lose **WVNY (ABC)** and **Nexstar** (which manages Mission stations) about the potential loss of **WFFF (Fox)** in VT. Other impacted Charter markets with Nexstar and Mission stations include Rockford, IL (**WQRF-Fox** and **WTVO-ABC**). **American Spirit Media**-owned **WDBD**, the Jackson, MS, Fox affil operated by **Raycom**, was warning that the station could go dark on **Bailey Cable**. But peace can still happen. **Cox** and **Schurz Comm** reached a new deal Wed that will keep CBS affil **WDBJ** on the MSO's lineup in Roanoke Valley. At our deadline, **Capitol Broadcast** stations, including **WRAL (CBS)** and **WRAZ (Fox)** in NC were still dark on **DISH**. These DISH fans have been down this path before, with the NBC Raleigh station off the satcaster for more than 6 weeks in 2013. Fox News also remained dark on DISH Wed. DISH said that it has made temporary replacement programming available as it works to reach an agreement. It's showing *Glenn Beck's TheBlaze* on channel 205 and **NewsMax** on Channel 206. "I have no idea how long TheBlaze will be on in place of Fox News. But for those of you looking for a channel that shares your values and principles, I hope you will give TheBlaze a chance," Beck, a former Fox News host, wrote on his Facebook page recently.

Ratings Trend Buckers: We mentioned in our lead story that **ESPN**, **Discovery** and **HGTV** bucked the ratings declines that many cable nets saw this year. Who else was in the positive column? **TLC**, whose avg of 1.1mln viewers in prime for the year is up 1% over 2013. Spike is up 4% to 905K viewers in prime. Also up YOY among nets averaging at least 500K P2 viewers are **Hallmark** (+3%, 894K) **Investigation Discovery** (+13%, 821K), **VH1** (+8%, 707K), **HBO** (+4%, 630K), **Disney Junior** (+17%, 590K), **OWN** (+16%, 480K) and **WE tv** (+39%, 480K). Some of the standouts among lower-rated nets include **Hallmark Movies & Mysteries** (up 33% to 344K), while **FXX** is up 108% to 339K (sibling **Fox Sports 1** is up 38% to 340K).

The Interview Comes to Cable: **Sony Pictures Ent** said Wed that it had inked deals with a host of MVPDs, via **In Demand**, to offer "The Interview" via VOD and PPV. **Comcast**, **Cox**, **DirectTV**, **Verizon FiOS**, **Cablevision** and **AT&T U-verse** are among distributors offering the movie. The film, which was pulled from its wide release theatrical schedule following threats of violence, will be available as a rental from \$5.99.

Closed Captioning Comments: Jan 20 is the comment deadline for the **FCC's** 2nd FNPRM on closed captioning quality standards, given the order's publication in the Federal Register. Replies are due Jan 30. The FCC is looking for comment on whether it should adopt a requirement for video programmers to file contact information and certifications of captioning compliance with the Commission or whether any other means should be used to make programmer contact info and certifications more widely available to consumers and interested parties.

Aereo Auction: A US Bankruptcy judge has given **Aereo** the OK to auction off its streaming technology. The company, which filed for bankruptcy in Nov, reached an agreement with broadcasters over the sale process. Broadcasters can attend the auction and Aereo will provide them with weekly updates on the status of the sale.

Programming: **TLC** launches weekly series "All About Sex" on Jan 10, 11pm. The net's 1st-ever late night talk show features *Margaret Cho*, *Heather McDonald*, *Marissa Jaret Winokur* and *Dr Tiffanie Davis-Henry*. The net has ordered 6 half-hour eps, with the foursome to tackle sex and love questions while connecting with women via social media. -- **A&E Nets** "Duck Dynasty" returns for a new season on Jan 7.

Editor's Note: Your next issue of **Cablefax Daily** will arrive on Mon, Jan 5. Happy New Year!

CableFAX Week in Review

Company	Ticker	12/31 Close	1-Week % Chg	YTD %Chg
BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS				
DIRECTV:	DTV	86.70	1.44%	25.54%
DISH:	DISH	72.89	0.39%	25.85%
ENTRAVISION:	EVC	6.48	0.47%	6.40%
GRAY TELEVISION:	GTN	11.20	2.19%	8.00%
MEDIA GENERAL:	MEG	16.73	(3.63%)	(25.97%)
NEXSTAR:	NXST	51.79	0.72%	(7.07%)
SINCLAIR:	SBGI	27.36	1.00%	(23.43%)
MSOS				
CABLEVISION:	CVC	20.64	2.69%	15.11%
CHARTER:	CHTR	166.62	1.21%	21.83%
COMCAST:	CMCSA	58.01	1.47%	11.62%
COMCAST SPCL:	CMCSK	57.56	0.90%	15.41%
GCI:	GNCMA	13.75	1.85%	23.32%
GRAHAM HOLDING:	GHC	863.71	(1.91%)	30.21%
LIBERTY BROADBAND:	LBRDA	50.09	1.58%	0.00%
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	LBTYA	50.20	(0.64%)	(20.26%)
SHAW COMM:	SJR	26.99	1.58%	10.89%
TIME WARNER CABLE:	TWC	152.06	1.84%	12.22%
PROGRAMMING				
21ST CENTURY FOX:	FOXA	38.41	(0.27%)	9.20%
AMC NETWORKS:	AMCX	63.77	6.67%	(6.37%)
CBS:	CBS	55.34	0.29%	(13.18%)
CROWN:	CRWN	3.54	(1.12%)	0.28%
DISCOVERY:	DISCA	34.45	(2.77%)	(61.9%)
DISNEY:	DIS	94.19	1.40%	23.29%
GRUPO TELEVISIA:	TV	34.06	1.67%	12.56%
HSN:	HSNI	76.00	1.04%	21.99%
LIONSGATE:	LGF	32.02	2.40%	1.14%
MSG:	MSG	75.26	0.25%	30.71%
SCRIPPS INT:	SNL	75.27	(3.29%)	(12.89%)
STARZ:	STRZA	29.70	1.71%	1.57%
TIME WARNER:	TWX	85.42	0.58%	22.52%
VIACOM:	VIA	75.50	(0.7%)	(13.98%)
WWE:	WWE	12.34	9.88%	(25.57%)

Company	Ticker	12/31 Close	1-Week % Chg	YTD %Chg
TECHNOLOGY				
ADVANTAGE:	AEY	2.44	1.24%	(9.29%)
AMDOCS:	DOX	46.66	(0.07%)	13.13%
AMPHENOL:	APH	53.81	2.83%	(39.66%)
AOL:	AOL	46.17	(2.8%)	(0.97%)
APPLE:	AAPL	110.38	(1.25%)	17.80%
ARRIS GROUP:	ARRS	30.19	2.48%	24.03%
AVID TECH:	AVID	14.21	1.57%	74.36%
BLNDER TONGUE:	BDR	2.69	7.17%	169.00%
BROADCOM:	BRCM	43.33	1.10%	46.14%
CISCO:	CSCO	27.82	0.16%	24.01%
COMMSCOPE:	CTV	25.64	(0.43%)	(3.35%)
CONCURRENT:	CCUR	7.09	2.60%	(13.22%)
CONVERGYS:	CVG	20.37	0.05%	(3.23%)
CSG SYSTEMS:	CSGS	25.07	2.24%	(14.73%)
ECHOSTAR:	SATS	52.50	4.52%	5.59%
GOOGLE:	GOOG	526.40	1.95%	(53.03%)
HARMONIC:	HLIT	7.01	(2.77%)	(5.01%)
INTEL:	INTC	36.29	(0.22%)	39.79%
INTERACTIVE CORP:	IACI	60.79	(1.14%)	(11.45%)

Company	Ticker	12/31 Close	1-Week % Chg	YTD %Chg
JDSU:	JDSU	13.72	(1.51%)	5.62%
LEVEL 3:	LVL	49.38	1.98%	48.87%
MICROSOFT:	MSFT	46.45	(2.54%)	24.16%
NETFLIX:	NFLX	341.61	0.44%	(7.21%)
NIELSEN:	NLSN	44.73	1.04%	(2.53%)
RENTRAK:	RENT	72.82	(2.26%)	92.19%
SEACHANGE:	SEAC	6.38	(4.06%)	(47.53%)
SONY:	SNE	20.47	(0.53%)	18.39%
SPRINT NEXTEL:	S	4.15	(18.15%)	(61.4%)
TIVO:	TIVO	11.84	(0.92%)	(9.76%)
UNIVERSAL ELEC:	UEIC	65.03	3.78%	70.64%
VONAGE:	VG	3.81	10.76%	60.76%
YAHOO:	YHOO	50.51	(0.73%)	24.90%
TELCOS				
AT&T:	T	33.59	4.45%	(4.47%)
CENTURYLINK:	CTL	39.58	(0.3%)	24.27%
TDS:	TDS	25.25	1.69%	(2.06%)
VERIZON:	VZ	46.78	(0.51%)	(4.8%)

Market Indices	Value	% Chg	YTD %Chg	
DOW:	DJI	17823.07	0.10%	7.52%
NASDAQ:	IXIC	4736.05	(0.62%)	13.40%
S&P 500:	GSPC	2058.90	(0.57%)	11.39%

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WINNERS & LOSERS

THIS WEEK'S STOCK PRICE WINNERS		
COMPANY	CLOSE	1-WK CH
VONAGE:	3.81	10.76%
2. WWE:	12.34	9.88%
3. BLNDER TONGUE:	2.69	7.17%
4. AMC NETWORKS:	63.77	6.67%
5. ECHOSTAR:	52.50	4.52%

THIS WEEK'S STOCK PRICE LOSERS		
COMPANY	CLOSE	1-WK CH
1. SPRINT NEXTEL:	4.15	(18.15%)
2. SEACHANGE:	6.38	(4.06%)
3. MEDIA GENERAL:	16.73	(3.63%)
4. SCRIPPS INT:	75.27	(3.29%)
5. AOL:	46.17	(2.8%)

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